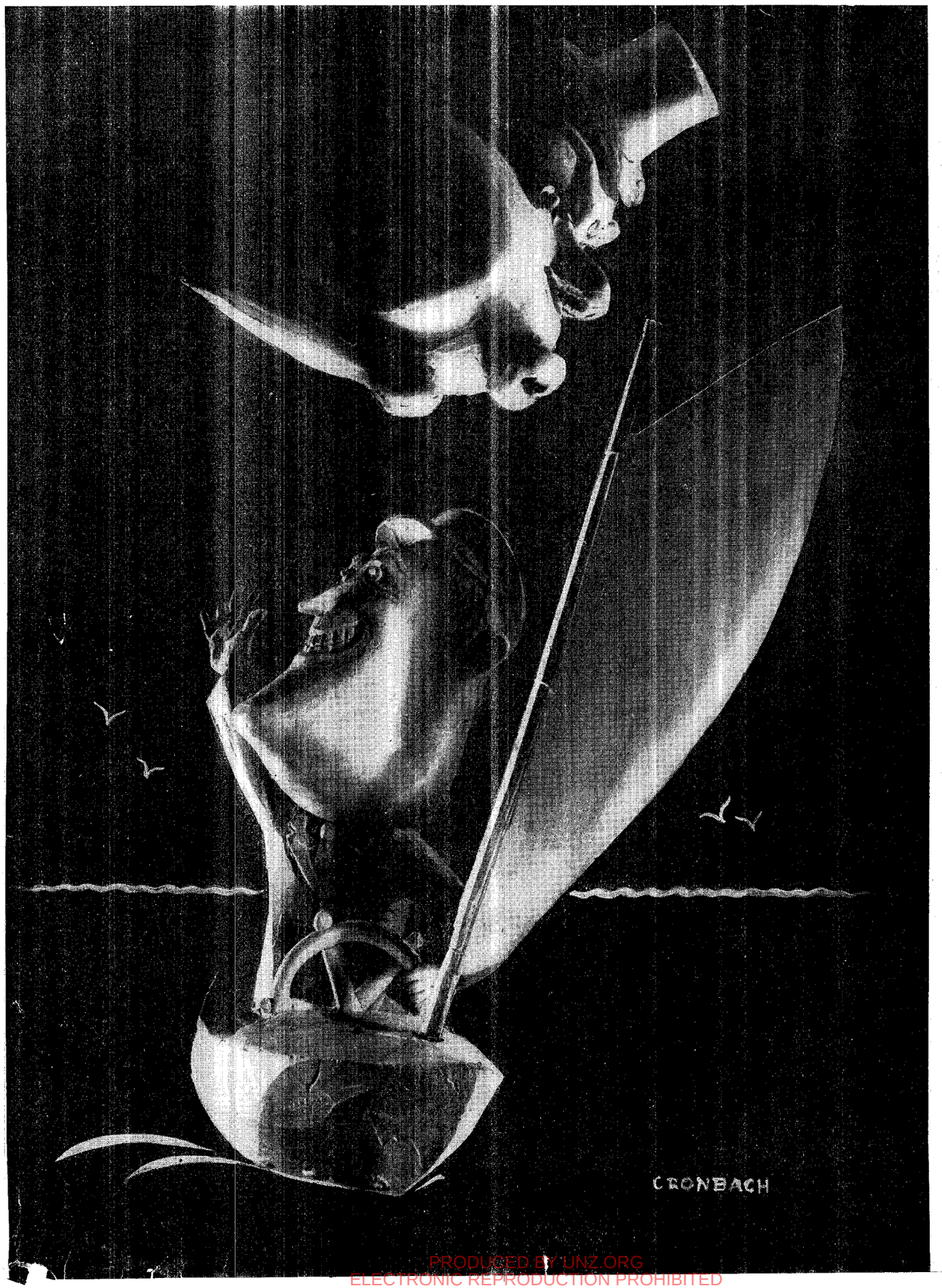
OOSEVELT AND THE W.P.A. DRAPER

NEW MASSES

ECEMBER 2 1936 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY



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Leo HUBERMAN

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Hugo GELLERT

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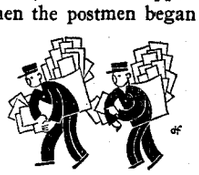
BETWEEN OURSELVES

TAKING a deep breath, we step forward into the second quarter-century of our existence. Everything about our twenty-fifth anniversary celebration gave us new hope and strength for the next lap of the journey. At this writing (Monday, Dec. 14), with returns very incomplete, we can report 55,000 copies of the Dec. 15 issue already sold—a new high for this magazine. Out-of-town sections are still to be heard from, and the New York newsstands, sold out, are receiving a fresh supply. And our birthday party at Mecca Temple in New York was tops. If you weren't there, you missed something. Michael Blankfort's *Anniversary Cavalcade* and Guest of Honor Art Young's talk were the high points of a generally exciting evening.

A couple of questions remain to be answered. Some of you new readers (just how many of you there are, we don't know yet, but we're very pleased to make your acquaintance, and we hope this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship) would like to know how it happened that out of a clear sky the postman brought you a copy of the special twenty-fifth anniversary issue of this magazine. And the regular readers, who were responsible for that little gift, would like to know how the whole scheme worked out.

During the past few weeks, we have been asking readers everywhere to send us a dollar and the names of ten friends they would like to see introduced to the NEW MASSES. The response was tremendous. George Willner, our circulation manager, whose idea it was, almost dropped off his perch when the postmen began to stag-



ger in. Over six thousand names. From California. From the feudal steel towns of Pennsylvania. From the Peace River Valley of Canada, where the timber wolves are an oppressed majority of the population. From Hamtramck, out of Detroit, Black Legion territory. From rock-ribbed Republican Vermont. From patients prescribing for their politically confused physicians.

Now comes the follow-upping. You folks who sent in names, ask your friends how they liked the special anniversary issue. You know what their answer will be. Get them to put it in writing in the form of a subscription. And you new readers who have already decided that this is a magazine you can't afford to be without, spread the good word. Do some friend of yours a favor. Send us a buck and a name and address, and we'll send a 12-week trial subscription. This country will be quite a bit farther along the road to freedom, prosperity, and happiness if this magazine doubles its circulation during the coming year. What could be a more appropriate and satisfying Christmas present than a subscription to the NEW MASSES?

Who's Who

JOHN STRACHEY, besides being our British correspondent, is the author of *The Theory and Practice of Socialism,* reviewed in this issue, and other well-known works. We have asked him to send us an article on the real story behind the abdication of King Edward VIII.

Leo Huberman, who reviews Strachey's book this week, is the author of *Man's Worldly Goods,* favorably reviewed in our issue of Dec. 8.

Jack Lindsay is an English critic, sociologist, and historian, one of whose works was *Antony and Cleopatra,* a Marxist interpretation. An article by him on the historical novel will appear in an early issue.

Theodore Draper is an old contributor who has joined the editorial staff of the NEW MASSES. Under the pen-name Theodore Repard he collaborated with Harry Gannes in writing the current *Spain in Revolt.*

A. B. Magil is well known to NEW MASSES readers for his contributions in the past. He is at present on the staff of the *Daily Worker.*

Rhoda Holmes is a free-lance journalist who has worked for a number of capitalist newspapers. She has written an article for us on racketeering in labor unions which will appear soon.

R. W. Wiley is an American journalist who has spent the last three years in Europe. Articles by him have appeared in the *New Republic.*

William Phillips has been a frequent contributor of reviews to our pages. He is one of the editors of *Partisan Review.*

H. N. Fairchild is a young Marxist scholar who has appeared in our pages before. His review of Ralph Barton Perry's Pulitzer-prize-winning life of William James was the first to recognize the importance of this work to bourgeois scholarship.

The lithograph by George Grosz on page 3 is from his portfolio collection *Interregnum,* published by the Black Sun Press. Hugo Gellert's lithograph on page 8 is from his book *The New Gulliver.*

What's What

AMONG the messages and editorial comments we have received are two we especially prize, both from spokesmen of the Negro people. The first is a telegram sent by James W. Ford, Negro vice-presidential candidate of the Communist Party in the 1932 and 1936 campaigns, to our birthday party at Mecca Temple Sunday night. Among other things, Comrade Ford said: "The Negro people, with hearts full of appreciation for your unequaled contribution to their advancement in the field of culture, join with all your friends in the beginning of another period of useful work to preserve and extend democracy." The second was editorial comment in the Chicago *Defender,* Negro newspaper, which said in part: "This week the NEW MASSES celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary. This magazine, which has done much to liberalize America, must be reckoned with as a force for good. . . . May it acquire new and larger spheres of influence."

Among those aiding in the entertainment at our birthday party were the New Singers. Their recent successes on the cultural front in Harlem will be signalized this Saturday night when they give their first concert there. The group will sing Lawrence Gellert's "Pickin' Off the Cotton," set to the music of a Negro folk song arranged by Citkowitz, at St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church, 65 W. 138th St.

David Ramsey, who has been a frequent contributor to the NEW MASSES, will lecture on "Dialectical Materialism" at 8 p. m., Friday evening, Dec. 18, at Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St., New York.

Rae Dalven did the translation from the Greek of the poem by Joseph Eliyia, who died five years ago at the age of twenty-nine. She writes: "He is the first Greek Hebrew poet we have."

George Dangerfield, NEW MASSES contributor and the author of *The Strange Death of Liberal England,* will lecture on "The Historic Role of Liberalism" on Monday evening, Dec. 21, at Irving Plaza, 15th St. and Irving Place, New York.

Start New Year's Eve right by coming to the NEW MASSES staff's warming-up party. It starts at 5 p. m., Thurs., Dec. 31, at the Guild Club, 846 7th Avenue. Food, drinks, entertainment, music. Admission 50c.

Flashbacks

AS Secretary Hull does his bit at Buenos Aires to extend Wall Street's empire, Latin America pauses to honor one who helped throw off an earlier imperial burden. Simon Bolivar, liberator of Spain's New World colonies, died Dec. 17, 1830. . . . The foremost living liberator of Negro America, James W. Ford, was born in Pratt City, Alabama, Dec. 22, 1893, twenty-eight years to the week after his people had become technically free by the ratification (Dec. 19, 1865) of the 13th amendment, abolishing slavery. . . . Anticipating Christmas by four days, and without benefit of any accomodating Star-in-the-East guiding wise men to his crib, Joseph Djugashvili was

born Dec. 21, 1879 in Gori, Georgia. Today, the Soviet Star guides wise men to the Kremlin and to this same Joseph, now surnamed Stalin.

THIS WEEK

December 22, 1936

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Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification direct to us rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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NEW MASSES
DECEMBER 22, 1936

"Progress" Lithograph by George Grosz

The Fascist World Offensive

In the midst of wars and rumors of wars, the author says, historical perspective reveals an urgent task

By John Strachey

AN uninterrupted storm of great events beats down upon us. Every year contains wars, revolutions, and political crises sufficient to occupy a pre-war decade. Their very magnitude and number tend to deafen and stun us. At first they excite, then they appall, at length they tend to produce indifference. In such a period it is important to step back from the picture, to try and see the world scene as a whole and to pick out the essential, dominating feature.

The dominating feature of the world situation in 1936 is the continuance of the fascist-capitalist counter-offensive. Throughout Europe the existing governing class is attempting to preserve its ownership of the means of production by establishing dictatorial rule. This attempt has dominated the world scene since 1932. We call it a counter-offensive because it follows a period of fifteen years, stretching from 1917 to 1932, in which the world scene was dominated by the attempt of the working class of Europe to take the means of production from their present owners and establish socialist economic systems.

How was it that after a decade and a half the working-class and progressive forces lost the initiative and have been driven to the defensive? The simplest answer to that question is that everywhere except in Russia the means of production remained in 1932 in the hands of the governing class. No paper victories, no Weimar constitutions, general election triumphs, or socialist ministries could modify that essential fact. The working-class offensive had been set going by the universal and intolerable suffering of the whole European working class in the war, and by the first great victory of the working class in the history of the world, the victory of the Russian workers in October 1917. But by 1932 the force of that great offensive (outside of the Soviet Union, where it still thundered forward) had been dissipated. The successive waves had beaten themselves upon the fortress

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of capitalism, and the fortress still stood. It was inevitable that for a time the vigor of the attack should decrease.

THESE are the undeniable facts of history. But the question that we really need to ask and answer is this: *Why* did the working-class offensive in the post-war period fail everywhere outside the Soviet Union? I cannot resist the conclusion that it was predominantly because that attack was led along a path which could take it only to defeat. I cannot resist the conclusion that the working class failed to abolish capitalism, for example, in western and central Europe because the Social Democrats and labor parties, which retained throughout this period their control over the working-class movement, were unwilling to press the attack to a decision. An important explanation of their conduct consists in the simple fact that the leaders of the German, the Austrian, the French, the Belgian, and the British working-class movements did not at heart desire that the attack should succeed. They did not think that the actual, then and there, abolition of capitalism was desirable or, indeed, possible. They had no faith in the ability of the working class to build up its own economic system after the fall of capitalism. They dreaded not merely the struggle which that expropriation would involve, but the chaos which they believed would follow. These fears dominated their whole psychology. They believed that it was necessary at all costs to divert the working-class movements from any decisive attack upon capitalism.

This was why they developed the view that there was an alternative road to socialism; that there was no necessity actually, here and now, within the post-war decade, to expropriate the capitalists; that it was only necessary to set up labor or Social Democratic governments which would then gradually reform capitalism out of existence. Some of them no doubt sincerely believed in the possibility of this process. Others of them cared little as to whether it was possible or not, so long as their advocacy of it served to divert the working class from pushing the struggle against capitalism to the decisive point.

They succeeded. By 1932 the terrific pressure which the working class, driven forward by the vile conditions imposed upon it, had exerted upon the shaky structure of post-war capitalism had everywhere abated. The "danger of violence and revolution" had, the socialist leaders sincerely believed, been averted. Kautsky, Scheidemann, and Noske in Germany, Otto Bauer in Austria, Blum in France, and MacDonald, Henderson, Snowden, and Thomas in Britain, all believed that whatever injury they might have done to the cause of socialism, they had performed a great service to their respective countries. They believed that they had prevented, in the only way in which it could have been prevented, the outbreak of civil violence. They had, they believed, insured that the twentieth century would be one of peaceful, evolutionary development.

Yes, incredible as it may seem to us who live in the Europe of 1936, they really believed that. They really supposed that by preventing the working class from abolishing European capitalism, they had at any rate prevented violence. They were so terrified of the possibility of the workers using violence against capitalism that they had come to believe that this was the only kind of violence that would occur in the world.

But a year had not elapsed after the final achievement of their purpose before Europe was plunged into a new and most violent kind of civil strife, and gigantic and universal preparations for a new world war were begun. Then it was seen that the prevention of one form of violence had merely resulted in opening wide the flood-gates to other and incomparably more dreadful forms of violence.

The leaders of the European working-class movement had forgotten that history cannot stand still. They had supposed, I take it, that once the working-class offensive had been diverted into the placid canal of exclusively parliamentary activity, the capitalists would remain passive. They did not dream that the moment that the pressure of the working-class offensive was relaxed, the capitalist counter-offensive would begin. But it has been so. The capitalists of Europe were under no illusion as to the stability of their system. They knew perfectly that they could not afford to wait an instant before launching their coun-

"Sure he's an Aryan. He's against the Reds, ain't he?" Maurice Becker

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ter-attack. They sought eagerly for the political and propagandist methods by means of which they might insure their rule against another wave of working-class intransigence. They found the desired method in fascism. The fascist model had been developed by the Italian capitalists during the period of general working-class advance. The Italian capitalists had shown that by the employment of an able demagogue, such as Mussolini, it was possible to divert a significant part of working-class revolutionary *élan* (once the working-class movement had been decisively checked by its own leaders) actually into the defense of capitalism itself! The German capitalists followed suit. Since then the fascist formula has been well established. In Britain and America alone have the capitalists found it unnecessary, as yet, to resort to it on a large scale.

Now the capitalists, in their counter-offensive, have not suffered in the very least from the inhibitions towards the use of violence which so haunted and hamstrung the labor and Social Democratic leaders in the period of working-class advance. In country after country a relentless and remorseless terror has descended on the working-class movement. While they were still listening to appeals on the part of their leaders that they should never use violence, the Italian, the German, and the Austrian workers were struck down by the unhesitating violence of their opponents!

The capitalist counter-offensive, using the new-found fascist method, has had immense initial successes. Over more than half of Europe a new form of capitalist dictatorship has been established. The initial success of fascism has been so considerable that some people in the working-class movement have felt that the complete success of the fascists was now inevitable; that we were faced with the prospect of a fascist century. This is a complete illusion. There is no possibility of a period of stable fascist domination of the world. Ineradicable characteristics of capitalism make its preservation in the present epoch inherently impossible. Even if the fascists were to conquer completely in every state of Europe, including the Soviet Union, they could not preserve capitalism. All that would happen would be that capitalist civilization would be destroyed in a series of gigantic wars, and that the new civilization, based on working-class rule and common ownership of the means of production, would have to start at an incomparably lower level. The fascists have immense capacity for destruction, but they are doomed to destroy themselves as well as their opponents. They can coöperate to a certain extent while they still have common enemies, but since the essential object of each fascist movement is the preservation of its own capitalist imperialism they are doomed to internecine strife. They have no economic program whatever except the intensification of every one of those characteristics of capitalism which drive it on to its own destruction. There is not the slightest fear, or hope, of the fascists solving any one of the basic problems which confront the human race today. Fascism is a purely destructive force. Hence in the end it cannot win.

There is, then, no shade of justification for the slightest tendency to defeatism. The initial successes of the fascist counter-offensive prove nothing except the urgency of successful resistance. The fascist counter-offensive can be resisted and defeated. If, for example, certain relatively simple and perfectly well-known things can be accomplished within a year or so inside the British labor and democratic movements, fascism can quite certainly be defeated there. And if fascism is decisively defeated in Britain it will be defeated in all Europe, for the struggle in Britain is the decisive one. Paradoxically, the defeat of fascism depends predominantly on educational work. The fascist movement makes an immense parade of force; it relies essentially upon violence—and upon violence perpetrated almost for the sake of violence. Yet it can and will be defeated largely by means of quiet, persistent work in influencing and educating the minds of the people of Great Britain, France, and America. For in fact the overwhelming predominance of force is already on our side. Those whose interest and inclination it is to defend peace, democracy, and the national standard of life form the overwhelming majority of the population of every country. It is only necessary to enable them to see the situation as it is, and so rid themselves of the illusions with which the forces of reaction are desperately attempting to shackle them, for fascism to become impotent.

It is true that an essential part of this peaceful task of education must be to convince men that they have no duty or obligation to submit passively to fascist violence; to convince them that the only possible way of saving their country from the horrors of civil war is to be ready to meet and break the paraded violence of the fascists with a democratic force so overwhelming that it can be quick and almost painless in action. But the decisive struggle is the struggle of ideas. It is well within our capacity to reach and enlighten the millions of admirable, sincere, and courageous men and women of the working seven-tenths of the population of every capitalist society. By so doing we can insure our victory over the fascist counter-offensive.

Already and everywhere, working-class and democratic resistance to the fascist world offensive is growing. The first great stroke of the capitalists, when they regained the initiative in 1932 (for the victory of the Italian capitalists was an isolated instance), was accomplished almost without working-class resistance. The German working-class movement was entirely paralyzed by that Social Democratic leadership which all through the 1920's had step by step surrendered the complete power which the German workers held in their hands in 1918. Nor did the German Communists ever quite succeed in shaking the hold of the Social Democratic leadership. A majority of the German workers, and a decisive majority of the German *employed* workers in the great industries, remained Social Democrats. They still believed that socialism could be achieved along the lines laid down by Kautsky, Hilferding, Scheidemann, Noske, and the rest. This situation presented the very maximum advantage to the fascist-capitalist counter-offensive. Hitler took power without a struggle.

This did not, to be sure, prevent the use of violence in Germany. On the contrary, unceasing and terrible violence against defenseless workers and democrats has been, from the very hour of the fascist victory, incessant in Germany. But it did not mean that effective struggle against fascism was impossible for either section of the working-class movement. This was the great disaster. The failure to put up a fight in Germany represented the very nadir of the working-class movement. At a blow it transformed the world situation and transferred the initiative to the capitalist side.

The capitalists still hold that initiative, but from that point onwards working-class resistance has grown again. The next fascist offensive was launched in Austria in 1934. This time the workers fought, and fought hard. They were defeated, but their fight has left a tradition in Austria which enormously aids the illegal working-class movement under the dictatorship. In 1934 also the fascists seemed to be close to power in France. But some, at any rate, of the lessons of Germany had been learned. The French working class was able to unite, to draw important sections of the middle class to it, and to seize the political initiative from the fascists. The struggle in France goes on; the fascists are by no means conquered. But the working-class and democratic forces are in an incomparably better position for conducting the struggle than they were two years ago. Finally, in the summer of 1936, before the French struggle had come to its climax, the fascists launched their civil war on the Spanish people. We do not know yet what the outcome will be; but already we know from three months of heroic struggle that resistance to the fascist offensive has reached an altogether new level. The Spanish militia has already proved that the working class of Europe has recovered from the German debacle. Even if fascism is enabled, by the effective gangsterism of Germany and Italy, and the poltroonery of the democratic powers, to conquer in Spain, it is clear that henceforward the fascists will everywhere have to meet ever-mounting resistance. Our task is to create a situation in which that resistance can be finally successful; to end the fascist-capitalist counter-offensive.

Meanwhile, we must recognize the fact that

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in the present period the working-class and democratic forces are on the defensive. This is a hard, objective fact which it is necessary to face. And when it has been faced, we may actually draw great advantages from it. In political as in military struggle the defensive has important advantages as well as disadvantages. It was, of course, an historical tragedy of the first order that the working-class initiative in the post-war period was ever lost; that capitalism was allowed to pass to the fascist counter-offensive. But this has happened, and it is no use pretending that it has not happened. The thing to do is to discover the way to take advantage of what favorable factors the new situation offers.

THE essential advantage which the working-class forces can gain from the fact that they are now on the defensive is unity with many democratic, progressive, and pacific organizations and persons, largely derived from the great middle class of the capitalist democracies. The advantage arises in this way. The fascist-capitalist offensive must threaten three of the fundamental interests of the people of every democratic country, namely, peace, democracy, and a relatively high standard of life for the mass of the population. Now there are many millions of persons who do not yet understand the connection between the continued existence of capitalism and the fact that peace, democracy, and their standard of life are menaced. Hence the objective possibility arises of united action between these millions and the fully politically conscious members of the working-class movement, who know that in fighting for peace, democracy, and the standard of life, they are in fact fighting against capitalism.

We Socialists and Communists say to our liberal, democratic, non-Socialist friends: "You believe that the private ownership of the means of production is quite compatible with the maintenance of peace, democracy, and the progressive improvement of the standard of life of the people. We do not. But, in any case, let us all agree to unite in preserving these three great interests. If you turn out to be right, our common action in defense of these three principles will have no ill effects upon capitalism. In denying the reactionary forces the possibility of making war, establishing their dictatorships, or degrading the national standard of life, we shall, on your hypothesis, do nothing to endanger the continuance of the private ownership of the means of production and their operation for profit. In this event you will have proved right.

"We, on the other hand, tell you perfectly openly that in our view we shall all discover by experience that a successful defense of peace, democracy, and the national standard of life will make the existence of capitalism impossible. For we are convinced that capitalism has now reached a position in which it can continue to exist only by making war, establishing its dictatorship, and reducing the working part of the population to destitution. However, there is no need for us to argue about this now. Let the event decide. We are all determined to preserve peace, democracy, and the national standard of life. If you prove to be right, and capitalism shows itself able to survive the successful defense of these principles, then we promise to abide loyally by the result. But, by the same token, we ask you not to flinch in your defense of these principles if we prove right and it becomes apparent that their preservation involves the abolition of capitalism."

Are not these fair and frank terms of agreement for common action between all democratic and progressive forces? Is it not possible for every democrat to unite in the common struggle against the fascist counter-offensive upon this basis? Upon this basis no liberal can feel the smallest element of suspicion that he is being entrapped. Nor on the other hand need a Marxist hold back or conceal any of his own views.

There is no doubt that this combination of Socialist and non-Socialist democrats offers us the possibility of defeating the fascist counter-offensive. In this combination the millions upon millions of men and women, whose united power can alone do this, can come together and act together. That is why every Marxist, who strives to apply his science to the living reality of the world as it is, must work unceasingly to produce that people's front, or farmer-labor party, which is the concrete embodiment of the above combination.

THIS, THEN, is the world of 1936. It is undeniably a world of violence, terror, and bloodshed. It is a world dominated by the fascist-capitalist counter-offensive. Such a world situation could not have come into existence if it had not been for the blindness and poltroonery of the leaders of the European working-class movements in the preceding decade. But out of men's very horror and loathing of the fascist assault arises our opportunity to unite forces which are amply sufficient to destroy fascism. The issue depends upon us. We have only to grasp our opportunity to make certain of our victory.

"And what's more, the canopy is bomb-proof."

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Sea-Strike Scene

When the crew is signed on for the first settled ship on the East Coast, the atmosphere forecasts a victory

By Rhoda Holmes

SMELL of smoke and human sweat, tocsin of strong male voices. Clump of boots and clamor of phones . . . the seamen's strike headquarters in New York. Seamen, dozens of them, oilers, wipers, messmen, firemen, linen-keepers, pantrymen, polishers, cabin-boys, pursers, and stewards.

Excitement which picks you up as you push through the dingy door on Eleventh Avenue, across the street from the tall ships' masts. Enthusiasm which pulls you along the stairs thick with empty tobacco packages and cast-off strike bulletins. Delirium which surrounds you at the top as the guard eyes your union card.

Delirium it is, made of the wild dreams of practical men. A long, low room hung with smoke and packed from door to door with a roaring crowd. A queue at a scrawled sign "All Men Eligible Apply Here," another at "West Coast Information and Census," another before "All Men Who Sign Up for Picket Duty and Do Not Report Will Not Get Food and Flop."

A little man surveying "For Free Bath See Housing." "Lend Your Overcoat to a Night Picket," "Protest the Copeland Bill," "Sign Here for the I.S.U. Soccer Team," plead the other walls.

Surge of the men to the bare board screen at the farthest end of the room. "Quiet!" bays a voice, and out of the Strike Strategy Committee gate rolls a stumpy figure in a small round hat and a pea-jacket. Behind is a blue-shirted seaman with a blond moustache and heavy horn-rimmed glasses. "Quiet!" yells Francis ("Mulligan") Mulderig. "Quiet!" booms William McCuiston.

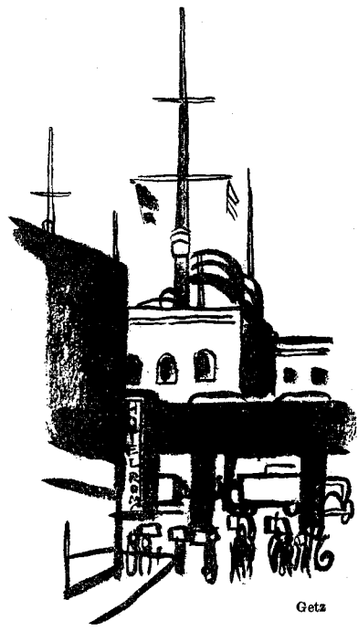
The boots stop clumping. Mulderig announces that a crew will be signed on for the S.S. *Santa Tecla,* Prudential Steamship Corporation vessel leaving immediately for Gulf ports. The boots stop, but the cheers start, and McCuiston's thumpings mean nothing until the seamen show how they feel about the *Santa Tecla.* It will be the first crew to leave under the agreement signed the day before by the Prudential.

"Have your cards ready," roars Mulderig over the din. "Your registration date and your picketing record are what will count."

Out come the small gray badges of strike service, proud records of a month of waterfront vigilance. McCuiston can stop pounding now, for hope is an even better silencer.

"Oiler, at ninety dollars a month and overtime," intones Mulderig, to be smothered by the whoop which goes up.

"Ninety a month, the b------s! Are they



Getz

signing oilers or company presidents?" "There isn't that much money, or if there is, they wouldn't give it away!" "Why didn't my mother raise me to be an oiler?"

Through the mob presses Joseph Wilson, small and sturdy, "Hooko" because of his nose. Veteran of labor struggles on both coasts, No. 39 on the strike honor roll, Hooko gets the first job.

"Oiler at ninety dollars a month and overtime," calls Mulderig, and up comes James Gallegon to be rewarded for an unpaid month in the engine room of *Tragedy I,* the little launch in which the men go down the bay to sound the strike call to incoming ships. Ninety a month looks big to Gallegon, who always thought he was lucky to get seventy-

Getz

two-fifty. Cash overtime at $1.50 an hour is like a couple of government bonds.

"Oiler at ninety dollars a month and overtime," calls Mulderig again, and the third member of the crew becomes James Mullen, "Moon" on land and sea, whose ponderous 250-pound frame has withstood the shocks of picket-line battles up and down the Atlantic and the Pacific.

"Fireman at eighty dollars a month and overtime," McCuiston yells over Mulderig's shoulder. Pat Kiely, "Popeye" to the crowd, engine-room delegate of the famous *California* crew of last spring, No. 90 since he walked off the *Washington* and sixty-two-fifty at the end of every month, is picked.

"Fireman at eighty dollars a month and overtime," sounds again. Hands in the pockets of his dungarees, little blue watch cap on the back of the head which has received brisk clouts from the law and company deputies in half a dozen ports, J. P. Quinn strides up and is enrolled.

"Messman at seventy dollars a month and overtime," is the reward for "Twenty-One Karat" Sterling, who has worked long and hard for forty-two-fifty until now. C. C. Morrow, gray-haired veteran of the rank-and-file movement, is signed on as chief steward. Twenty-two-year-old Harry Mazurowski becomes the *Tecla* utility man.

Twenty-six of them are taken, and all twenty-six are thumped vigorously by dozens of fists as they get their instructions, yell good-bys, and start off for the Seamen's Institute to collect their gear before reporting to the *Tecla* at her Brooklyn pier.

Beaming at the scene is big Joe Curran, chairman of the Strike Strategy Committee, who is the center of the room no matter where he is standing. Beside him lounges Jack Lawrenson, lean Irish oiler, secretary of the committee. Eddie Rothbach shouts reports over the telephone while Blackie Meyers hounds Tony Hennessey for advertising money for the *Pilot,* strike organ.

"You know, lady," says Joe, reaching over for a package of dates someone has left in the corner, "this is sort of historical. That's the first crew ever to go out of the Atlantic Coast with a Pacific Coast wage scale."

"Highest wages paid in the American merchant marine since 1921!" bellows Eddie Rothbach into the phone.

"They're beginning to crack on this side . . ." dictates Lawrenson to a frowning seaman who laboriously picks out on the typewriter a letter to the Joint Strike Committee in San Francisco.

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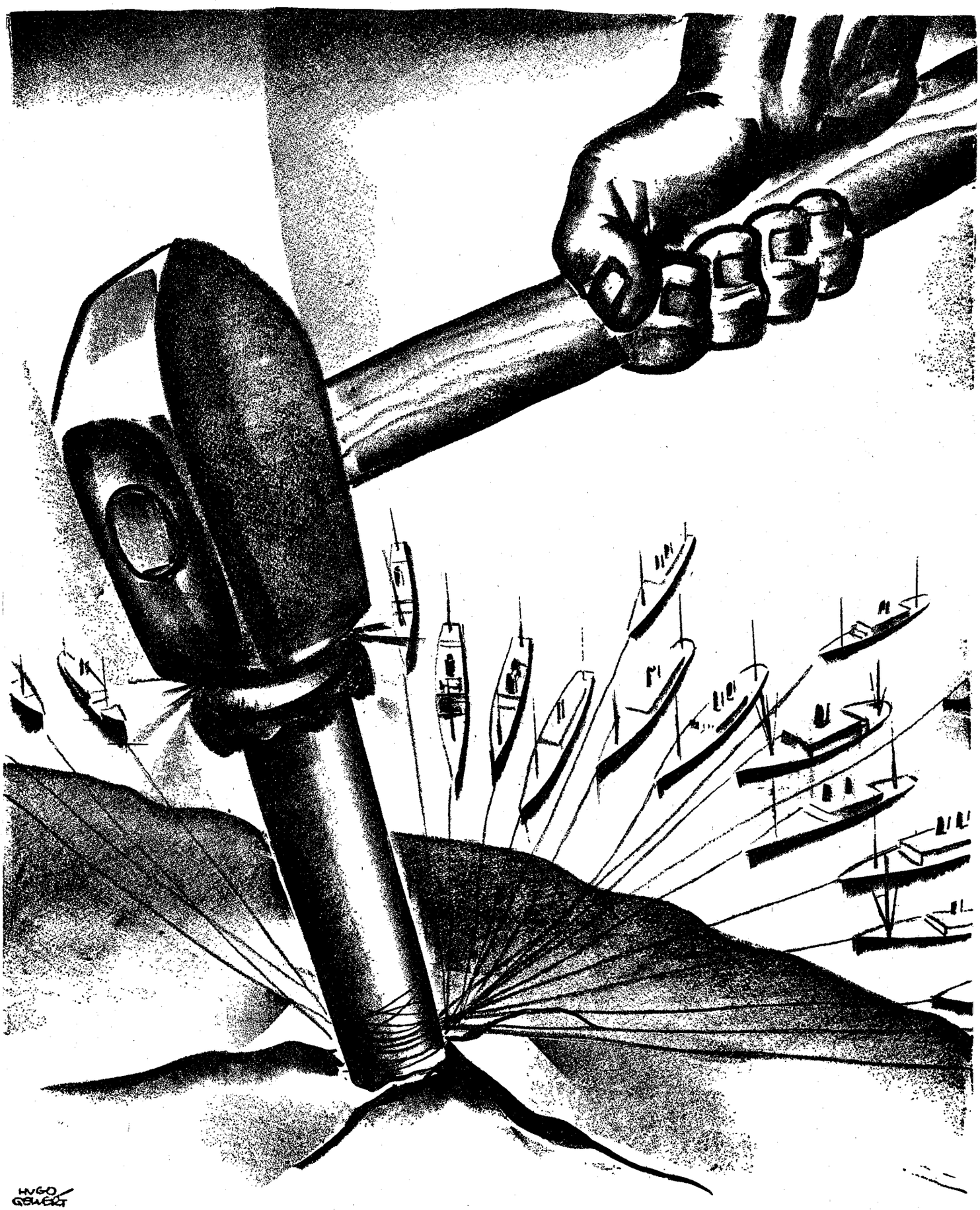

Lithograph by Hugo Gellert

THUNDER!

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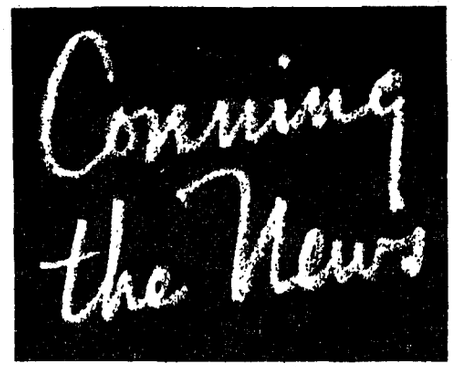

Covering the events of the week ending December 14

SUPERFICIALLY, the week was one of high melodrama. In London, a king-emperor abandoned his throne and went into exile, unable to discharge his royal duties, he explained, "without the help and support of the woman I love." And in a far-off province of western China a powerful general startled the world by kidnaping and reportedly killing the dictator-president of the Chinese Republic. Beneath the theatrics of both events appeared swirling political currents far transcending them in importance.

Of the two developments, the more significant was the episode in the Orient. According to first reports, anti-Red troops in Shensi, under the command of Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang, decided it was more to China's advantage to drive the Japanese out of Manchuria than to fight Chinese Communists. Duly alarmed, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek flew to Shensi, into the waiting arms of Marshal Chang, himself the former ruler of Manchuria. The price of Chiang's freedom, wired Chang at first, was an immediate declaration of war against Japan, a pledge by the central Nanking government to recover all lost territories, and the reorganization of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) so as to readmit Communists to membership.

From later reports, however, it appeared that Japan itself might have had a hand in the Shensi events. For Chang's action promised to plunge China into civil war and thereby favor Japan's aggressive drive on the Asiatic mainland. An immediate result of such a conflict would be the renewal of Japan's campaign to capture Suiyuan province, where its Mongol mercenary forces were recently repulsed by Chinese defenders. It was not unlikely, some observers felt, that War Lord Chang had used anti-Japanese slogans knowing that to do so would discredit them. The view that his coup was intended to disrupt genuine resistance to Japan was strengthened by a report that the marshal, before the alleged execution, had modified his demands, asking primarily that Nanking cede him certain "choice provinces" and a greater share of booty from the treasury.

The Japanese government was reported "gravely concerned," however, and its press was quick to point an accusing finger at Moscow. Fantastic charges that Chang Hsueh-liang was planning a government with Soviet support were characterized by Tass, the Soviet news agency, as "without foundation" and a "malicious invention."

Helping to hold in check the danger of an immediate anti-Soviet outburst by Japan was the still-pending fisheries treaty, which Moscow has so far refused to ratify because of Japan's "anti-Communist" treaty with Germany. The refusal, which plunged Tokyo into diplomatic doldrums, threatened the job of Foreign Minister Arita, who, along with Premier Hirota, was called to account by the emperor's Privy Council for his artlessness. Criticism was directed at the two officials not so much for having concluded the alliance with Germany as for having allowed the U.S.S.R. to learn of it before its signature to the favorable fisheries agreement had been secured. Apologies were not considered to be of sufficient avail for Arita to retain his job unless the Soviet Union should be convinced that the German agreement is as innocuous as Arita now says it is.

BRITAIN'S colossal fantasy came to at least an official end when the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod summoned the Commons to the House of Lords to hear the momentous abdication of Edward VIII. Two days later the man who had been, among other things, Emperor of India and Defender of the Faith, and is now merely the Duke of Windsor, walked his dog up and down the lonely station platform at Salzburg, Austria, waiting to continue his journey to the remote castle of the Rothschilds. What was once his government felt satisfied that it had salvaged the moral aura about the throne, though the higher clergy continued to sprinkle the royal seat with spiritual antiseptic.

While the leadership of the Labor Party had, from the beginning, identified itself with Prime Minister Baldwin, citing in justification the fact that Mosley's fascists were supporting the king, Communists and Left Laborites refused to be jockeyed into such a position. Branding Baldwin's stand against Edward an attempt to strengthen the class aspects of the throne, they waged an energetic campaign to divorce labor from both king and prime minister, and urged the establishment of a republic. When Baldwin appeared before the House, Communist member William Gallacher scouted the minister's claim that he was upholding the right of the commoner against royalty. Baldwin had not so much as consulted with members of Parliament, Gallacher pointed out. While the Duke of Windsor is now officially out of public life, anti-fascists were not unmindful that English capitalists, remembering his democratic pretensions, might, in some future contingency, find him a useful figure for exploitation.

THE solution of the Edwardian crisis had the beneficial effect of returning European attention to the Spanish battlefront. Little military action was reported during the week, the long-awaited general offensive by Franco against Madrid still failing to materialize. Coinciding with the perceptible weakening of the rebel military position, came an Anglo-French proposal for a plebiscite to decide the outcome of the war. Its sponsors maintained, before the moribund London Non-Intervention Committee, that their plan would prevent the Spanish crisis from developing into an international war. The fact that Franco's uprising had as its aim the annulment of a popular election, they did not seem to consider relevant. Included in the mediation plan was a proposal for an embargo against arms and foreign volunteers to either side. Asked for Moscow's stand, Maxim Litvinov expressed his government's willingness to cooperate in mediation efforts and "with other states to declare abstinence from direct and indirect actions which could result in foreign intervention in Spain, expecting, however, that there would be secured and guaranteed absolute control of similar abstinence by other states." It was plain, however, that the Soviet regarded the move as a futile gesture. Berlin, while intimating clearly that it would not countenance any outcome other than a victory for Franco's junta, which it pleased to term the "national government," declared nevertheless that it was ready to discuss mediation with other powers.

Aside from Franco's failure, Berlin found much to worry over. Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, speaking at the centennial celebration of the German Association for Geography and Statistics, made of it anything but an academic occasion. Colonies-or-war was the theme: "Germany is a country with too large a population and too small room." In what might easily have been taken as an allusion to President Roosevelt's address at Buenos Aires, Schacht upbraided "Those foreign statesmen who seek to bring the European problem under the rubric 'Here democracy, here fascism.'"

The Frankfurt *Zeitung* shortly after this outburst published facts relating to Germany's grain shortage which explained much of Herr Schacht's vociferousness. The newspaper reported the Reich short at least one million tons of wheat, which it will have to import, and one million tons of rye, which it will have to deduct from its seed supply.

Less oblique than Herr Schacht was the Nazi press in its comments on the Buenos Aires Conference for the Maintenance of Peace. Terming it a "Machiavellian" affair, German papers featured General Ludendorff's charge that it was "a plot by Jews, Catholics, and Freemasons, whose agent Roosevelt is, to oust German culture from Latin America."

IN its second week, the conference turned its attention to eight proposed plans for conciliation and neutrality, chief among them the draft convention presented by Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Argentina and other nations belonging to the League of Nations saw in two features of Mr. Hull's draft an attempt to isolate the Americas still further from the world. These were the provision for a permanent inter-American conciliation body,

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which Argentina felt would tend to substitute itself for the League of Nations, and the extension to all Latin America of the United States neutrality policy, which contradicts the sanctions provisions of the League of Nations covenant.

After three days of discussion in closed conferences, there emerged a compromise program which was said to enjoy the support of the twenty-one nations present. The first Hull proposal was dropped. Consultation was provided for common action by the signatory powers when made necessary by a state of war between American nations, or in case "the peace of the American republics is menaced" by a war involving powers outside the Western Hemisphere. Mr. Hull's second controversial proposal, for extending the administration's neutrality policy to Latin-American nations, was to appear in an emasculated form, in a convention coördinating treaty observance. At the last moment, however, Argentina held up proceedings, apparently to press for the further weakening of the neutrality clause.

The Mexican delegation utilized the fact that Washington was anxious for it to ratify the conventions on peace to press for non-intervention guarantees. While the pledge adopted at Montevideo in 1933 simply proscribed "intervention," signatories to the present convention "declare to be inadmissible the intervention of any one of them directly or indirectly, and for whatever reason, in the internal affairs of any other of the parties." This was regarded as a defensive achievement designed to block indirect intervention such as that carried through by the Roosevelt administration in Cuba, which resulted in the ousting of the Grau San Martin government.

At another point south of the Rio Grande occurred a political development of more than local interest. From Mexico City came word that the Cárdenas administration would permit Leon Trotsky to take up his residence in the republic to the south. The decision, vigorously protested by the Mexican Workers' Confederation, struck most Leftists and friends of the Soviet Union as especially unbecoming since Mexico itself only recently banished former President Calles for counter-revolutionary conspiracy and terrorist activities. It was considered ominously significant that Trotsky's defenders were found chiefly in the Regional Workers' Confederation, the corrupt pro-Calles minority wing of Mexican labor.

THE proceedings in Buenos Aires were thrown into curious light by the startling announcement of Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring on what the American people may expect when "M-Day" (war mobilization day) comes, if the War Department has its way. A war mobilization plan, most of the details of which were revealed by the Nye Committee (and printed in the NEW MASSES of March 3, 1936), will be introduced in Congress, providing for a virtual presidential dictatorship in time of war. Woodring's public announcement stressed features of the plan to "conscript industry" by granting the President power to fix prices, regulate commodity exchanges, and the like, through appointed war-time boards. What would virtually negate any such conscription are provisions against the "freezing" of prices (permitting bloated war-time profits), prohibition of "unethical competition" for labor by war industries (preventing firms from offering labor wages higher than competitors), and opposition to taxation "of such a drastic nature as to hinder, hamper, or destroy the more important mission of producing munitions as required in war." Two sections of the report were significantly held back from public view on the pretext that they were undergoing revision: one for tight war-time censorship and the other for a universal draft of labor and soldiers. Under questioning, Woodring admitted that this war-time dictatorship would permit the president completely to void all existing labor legislation.

Aline Fruhauf

George VI—Mounted an antiseptic throne

With Roosevelt approaching home shores, his subordinates appeared to be beating a quick retreat from their program of firing 425,000 workers from W.P.A. relief projects (see page 14). The retreat was in no sense connected with the return of the President, however, but rather with the continuous and effective protest by relief workers and their sympathizers. Blanket dismissals on a quota basis were stopped and the policy of retaining everybody "in need" was restated, but no action was taken for the 198,350 relief workers dismissed between November 7 and December 5, and the definition of "need" remained as hazy as ever.

In Washington the Supreme Court voted to uphold the California and Illinois price-fixing statutes. The state laws in question permit manufacturers to fix the retail price of their products and to refuse to sell to cut-rate dealers. Small retailers rejoiced, department stores and chains took the decision as a defeat, consumers found nothing to cheer about, since the general price level of certain commodities, chiefly drugs and cosmetics, will be higher.

Manufacturers, assembled in Washington for their forty-first convention, were gratified at the Court's decision, although it received only minor attention. Chiefly their convention, as well as the second meeting of the Council for Industrial Progress, was important for the light it threw on the post-election thoughts of the country's leading industrialists. The manufacturers' convention indicated that big business is still on the defensive as a result of the Landon fiasco, even though it has not as yet retreated from any of its essential policies. Gone was the former truculent opposition to the New Deal and President Roosevelt; instead, "coöperation between government and business" and the need of vaguely stated "reforms" featured many of the speeches as well as the newly-adopted Declaration of Principles for American Industry. This pronouncement, borrowing much of its phraseology directly from the New Deal school of thought, contented itself with a succession of generalities without forgetting to deplore government competition with business, to snipe at relief or to call for lower taxes in the higher brackets.

The meeting of the Council for Industrial Progress, brain-child of Major George L. Berry, coördinator for industrial coöperation and labor leader, opened inauspiciously, with a lukewarm message by President Roosevelt and an effective boycott by practically all the big trade associations. President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, in the most important address, advocated a thirty-hour week and a permanent advisory economic council, with equal representation for labor, industry, and the public. The council, which can only make recommendations to the President, proposed a three-point program for a revised N.R.A., more effective anti-trust laws, and government-guaranteed loans to small business enterprises.

ON a less theoretical labor front blood flowed freely. Chester, Pa., home of the Sun Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., was the scene of a fierce and wholly unprovoked attack on a picket line by police, scabs, firemen, and strong-arm strikebreakers. One striker was killed, another may die, and more than a hundred others were injured, some severely, when John G. Pew, president of the company, ordered the strike broken by violence. Undaunted by the show of brutality, Charles Renner, *international vice-president of the* Union of Marine & Shipbuilding Workers, challenged the Pew forces: "They can't build ships and the yard will face a shutdown until the company settles with the union."

Striking seamen in New York likewise got a taste of nightstick arbitration when police cleared the waterfront for the docking of the United States cruiser *Washington*. Nevertheless, Atlantic Coast [illegible] workers gained new hope from the [illegible] of the Eastern & Gulf Sailors' Associ[illegible]e of the three constituent groups in the International Seamen's Union. Electing [illegible]ick ("Blackie") Myers, rank-and-file [illegible] as delegate of the New York local, the [illegible]ion voted to expel all strike-breaking [illegible]fficers.

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Blackshirt Theater

The death of Pirandello raises anew the question of the influence of his mysticism and of Fascist "philosophy" on the Italian theater

By R. W. Wiley

ONE can estimate the importance of Pirandello on the contemporary Italian drama only by comparing the work of the "maestro" with that of his rivals and disciples. Two facts immediately strike the attention: first, that Pirandello was immeasurably superior to any other dramatist now writing in Italy; second, that all the others slavishly imitate, with varying degrees of success, the technique, the style, and the "Pirandellian" philosophy of the Nobel-prize winner. It is impossible to go to the theater in Italy and not meet his specter. There is not a single play that doesn't reek of his turgid mysticism.

Yet this is not odd. No other formula could be so well adapted to the exigencies of the Fascist stage. You have a semblance of reality and underneath it a kind of dream world of fantasy. Italians would like to be realistic and "Mediterranean," hence the semblance of reality. But they also like to unleash their polysyllabic rhetoric whenever the occasion permits—as must often be the case in a dream world of fantasy like Mussolini's Italy. It would be impossible for the contemporary Italian author to write a play which did not depend chiefly on fantasy for its effect. He would have to become realistic. That is, he would have to show life as it actually is in Italy today, and that is anything but Pirandellian. After the first representation of his play—if it ever got so far—your author would probably be sent to the island of Lipari (by now the Æolian Isles have probably become the most select intellectual colony in Italy). So he turns to Pirandello for his inspiration and to Fascist propaganda for his material. When the two ingredients have become so thoroughly mixed as to be indistinguishable, his work is completed. There is only one drawback: no one goes to see the play. Despite all Pirandello's protests to the effect that the Italian drama is the best in the world, and that modern Italian drama is superior to that of the past, and that he, Pirandello, was superior to all other dramatists, the theaters become emptier and emptier.

Nero, 1936 Lithograph by J. Vogel

It must have been discouraging for one who had received the accolade of the Nobel prize to see his plays performed to empty houses. But Fascism found subtle means of soothing his irritated sensibilities. Every now and then the aged maestro was called upon to deliver himself of a portentous lecture in praise of Mussolini, Fascism, and himself. It should be noted that Pirandello joined the Fascist Party shortly after the murder of Matteotti, when full responsibility had been placed on the leadership of the party. When asked to explain his action, Pirandello answered in one word, pregnant with mystic innuendo: "Matteotti." Nonetheless, he never tired of declaring that art and politics do not mix, that they have absolutely no connection.

But he was not averse to sponsoring embryonic dramatists who sought to combine his philosophy with the propaganda of the regime. He knew that it could not be done; so his laurels were safe. Of course he would have denied indignantly that the subject of *Frederick the Second*—an insane king asserts he is far wiser than his normal subjects—had any connection, however subtle, with the present situation in Italy. No, art and politics are separate and distinct activities. Let our young writers attempt to combine them and you will see how right I am, he would have said.

Hence, the "Littoriali del Teatro" which

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were held at Florence from the ninth to the seventeenth of February, 1936. Eight plays, judiciously selected beforehand, were presented by eight different Italian universities in collaboration with the amateur theaters of the several *Dopolavoro* (After-Work—i.e., recreational) organizations. The subject selected for competition was one dear to both Pirandello and Mussolini: The Family. I shall briefly outline the plot of the different plays. It will be seen how much they owe to the maestro and how much to the duce.

THE first play, *Rye Bread,* was presented by the G.U.F. (*Gruppo Universitario Fascista*) of Milan. In it we are shown the household of a peasant farmer, one of whose sons was a deserter in the World War; the other, to expiate his brother's fault, has gone as a volunteer to East Africa. The peasant laments the dereliction of his first-born but exults in the second, who is fulfilling his duty as a patriotic Italian soldier. In the second act we are present at the fortuitous meeting of the two brothers—the elder repenting his misdeeds: "the volunteer and the deserter united forever in the sacred name of their Fatherland." The play ends on a note of exalted mysticism. At home the peasant beholds a vision of his two sons fighting side by side for Italy. Their weapons are bared sabers, not mustard gas. In the words of the critic of the Florentine *Nazione,* whose political orthodoxy is above suspicion: "The author was unable to develop his plot convincingly and so lost himself in useless chatter and complete emptiness of form and idea as to arouse in the audience a most lively rebellion." And so on. This is daring criticism in Italy. It must have cost the critic some hours of sleep, knowing, as he does, that the review will receive the careful attention of the Ministry of the Press in Rome, and that the Littoriali must have a success, merited or unmerited. The "lively rebellion" of the audience, which felt no hesitation in expressing its disapproval, consisted in whistling, shouting, stamping, at almost every line.

The work of the second evening met with no greater success, and it certainly did not deserve any. This was *The Convergents,* presented by the University of Padua. A young man upbraids his family for having brought him into the world only to suffer, and he goes out to seek his fortune. After a number of unexciting and inconclusive adventures he returns, fortune won. After all, the old life was the better. This is exactly the conviction Mussolini has been trying so long to instill in the Italian emigrants who blindly persist in living abroad.

Twentieth Century Rhythms, by the G.U.F. of Pistoia, seems to have been, in the opinion of the judges, the least successful of the plays. I do not know why it should have been singled out for such severe reprobation, but some decision had to be made, and after all the G.U.F. of Pistoia is not at all the powerful organization that the other groups represent. The play is in two scenes, with the same actors and the same situation in both. They are shown first as members of the wealthy cosmopolite bourgeoisie, and then as a peasant family, poor, yes, but how infinitely happy sacrificing their all for the Fatherland! If only the Italian people in general could reconcile themselves to such a mode of existence! That's the idea, expressed in lines the banality of which is inconceivable to one who has not perused an Italian newspaper or seen any manifestation of the new spirit in Italy.

The play presented by the Bolognese group, *A Voice Calls,* was far and away the most extraordinary of them all. It opens at a reception given by a young man just returned from the university. Five men but no women. The host is upbraided by the guests for having failed to provide companions. What to do? He calls in the gardener's daughter. She is beautiful, voluptuous; lust flames up in the eyes of the guests, who are portrayed as debauched sons of the aristocracy. After a short preamble they simply leap on the poor gardener's daughter and she is overwhelmed in their collective embrace. In the meantime the host has gone out into the fields to pick flowers with still another daughter of the farmer. The idyllic love between these two is kept in exquisite symbolic contrast with the sordid passion of the others throughout the play. The second act shows that a change is coming over the young men. They begin to repent their past life; each one in turn demands the victim of their collective rape in marriage, but with no success. In the last act the child is born. The décor is highly suggestive. The woman is upstairs in the bedroom. The doctor keeps coming to the door to recount the progress of the travail to the assembled suitors. One by one they creep slowly up the stairs to hold the new-born infant. When they return it is with transfigured faces that they face the future. Complete regeneration; a new life has opened to them: new hope, new joy, something to live for. This is exactly the ideology of the new penal code in Italy: rape is rape only when aggravated by the sin of abortion. *A Voice Calls* might easily have been written by Pirandello; it lacks only his superficial polish.

THE next night we were treated to *The Birth and Life of Luigi Falta,* given by the Genoese group. The hero, an artist, is tired of his routine life (interesting, how many of these plays are motivated by a desire to escape). We see him, after some period of internal struggle, at the railroad station with his satchel, as yet undecided where to go. A fisherman talks with him, and he is persuaded to go to a village by the sea where the population is in ferment because the "authorities" (who the authorities are in this play we

Anton Refregier

Militarism

The black polity is mute and as if in meditation,
Vainly searching, they say, for the happiness which passed;
A wraith-like form stalks by, in khaki,
Lightning slides snake-like into my heart's gloom,
And in the silent squares and in silent alleys,
"Tran tran" echo the spurs.

Within the soul reëcho the winds of slaughter,
In her desolated house the old woman recalls her son,
A mother squeezes her babe in her embrace and shudders,
As a passerby sings: "The Son of Psiloriti."*
And in silent squares and in silent alleys,
"Tran tran" echo the spurs.

The heart restrains its tear and rechills from tremor,
Thick darkness in the soul and the boots threaten,
Some laborer with drooped shoulder blasphemes,
A hoarse dog barks—barks—
And in the silent squares and silent alleys,
"Tran tran" echo the spurs.

JOSEPH ELIYIA.

* *A Song About Venizelos.*

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never learn) have decided to dispossess them and thus make it necessary for them to fly to the mountains. Falta becomes the organizer of their resistance. Unfortunately, the fishermen weaken at the last minute and leave the hero alone by the seashore. There is a terrific storm (the offstage mechanics were particularly praised by the Fascist "authorities" present at the spectacle). Falta has a vision of his mother walking majestically across the stage through the rain. He shrieks: "Mother, I have dreamed life." Curtain. The next day the critics agree that the last line is superbly beautiful and worthy of the best tradition of the Italian stage, i.e., of Pirandello.

One scene of this play was a combination of the plotting of a revolution and a drunken orgy. It was the nearest any of the productions came to actuality. It is interesting that it should have been written by a Genoese, for it is exactly Genoa and the Ligurian coast which have been the hotbed of every insurrectionary movement in Italy. It is traditional. Even in the other plays there was evidence of regionalism. The Neapolitan group, for example, presented a play groaning under the burden of the philosophy of Croce, Neapolitan par excellence. The play of the Turin group savored highly of the "mondanità" which has penetrated this city from beyond the Alps.

In the first of these two, still another youth is dissatisfied, wants to become a writer, repudiates his bourgeois family and his fiancée, and becomes vassal to a certain Roberto, philosopher. The girl is unhappy that she cannot fulfill all her lover's wants. She protests that there is poetry in the little things of life: home, baby, etc. But he is not to be persuaded, as he is still completely under the spell of Roberto. The philosopher tells her that her lover will be successful as a writer only when he has known sorrow. She resolves to commit suicide, but is rather easily dissuaded. In the meantime the aspiring poet has been grinding out verse which Roberto laughs at in great disdain. The poet in a moment of blind rage pummels his mentor. Afterwards he announces that he is now free of the burden which has been overwhelming him; he renounces literature. His fiancée looks on with streaming eyes. He embraces her. Yes, there is poetry in the little things of life.

During the presentation of this play the Florentine audience kept up a continual hubbub, and at last Roberto, stopped, came to the footlights, called them all manner of Neapolitan names, and then stepped back to resume his role. Another example of regionalism: the quarrel between Naples and Florence is perennial.

THE last play, *We Are Not Love Children,* was given by the group from Turin. Many personages of the Italian literary world were present for the occasion, including the state inspector of theaters. This was the play which won more prizes than any of the others—for actually more prizes were given than there were competitors, to create the illusion of an abundance of first-class literature in Italy. At least this play did adhere strictly to the selected theme. A man and woman are living together, unmarried. With them live the two children of the first and the daughter of the second. The man has long been separated from his wife. Two of the children are enamored of each other, and in the second act the girl becomes pregnant. The parents are scandalized, quite oblivious of the evil example they have set. The third child in the meantime has searched out her forsaken mother and brought her back to the paternal roof, forcing the other woman to leave. A moving scene of reconciliation: the father and mother embrace, swearing eternal love; the son ecstatically embraces the daughter of the outcast, and the father, regenerated, beams benign approval.

The curtain falls. A tremendous ovation. This may be explained by the presence of the "authorities." The play simply had to be a success, so the empty seats were hastily filled by a claque rounded up at the university. They were given detailed instructions as to how they should regulate their applause. They were so enthusiastic by comparison with the fiasco of the preceding evenings that the whistles of dissent went almost unheard. Even so, the critics were able to write that *We Are Not Love Children* had received a merited ovation. Things like that are well organized in Italy.

Any kind of incontinence is justified so long as the woman concerned finally becomes fruitful and multiplies (Marinetti reproves the Anglo-Saxons for their indifference towards women). The home is the cradle of soldiers. Poverty, when combined with the martial spirit of the Fascists, is the highest ideal toward which one can aspire. Life cannot be full and complete until consecrated to Mussolini. This is the sum total of the week's entertainment. This is Fascist art become at last audible. Although the audience expressed its disapproval of most of the plays—even in the Fascist Italian there still remains a vestigial trace of good sense and of human values—not one of them could write anything that would be essentially different. Unconsciously they are revolted by the false spectacle that confronts them, but their conscious minds have already been poisoned. After the downfall of Fascism in Italy it will be years before an art or literature can be born out of these stunted minds. What is going on in the intellectual world of Italy is as effective as if quicklime were to be plowed into the already barren soil. It is enough to walk up and down the corridor during the intermission to be convinced of the complete sterility of the average university student. He laughs at the puerile efforts of his colleagues and in the next breath he talks seriously of Pirandello's contribution to world literature, or he talks of war music as a new art which is being developed thanks to the efforts of Mussolini. Some even study seriously Marinetti's rules of æsthetics, which I append as the most characteristic contribution of Fascism to civilization.

Lithograph by I. Marantz

To be memorized by all sincere futurist poets and artists.

War has a beauty of its own:

1. Because it fuses together in harmony, strength and kindness. Strength alone tends to cruelty and kindness to debility, but the two together generate solidarity and generosity.
2. Because it assures the supremacy of mechanized man, equipped with gas masks, flame-throwers, and tanks, over machines.
3. Because it begins the long-dreamed metallization of man.
4. Because it completes the beauty of a flowery meadow with its machine guns, passionate orchids.
5. Because when the symphony of rifle fire and artillery bombardment stops, the songs of soldiers can be heard and the perfumes and odors of putrefaction can be perceived.
6. Because it genially remolds terrestrial scenery with inspired artillery.
7. Because it creates new architecture such as the heavy tank.
8. Because it exceeds in violence the battles of the angels and the devils.
9. Because it definitely cures man of individual fear and collective panic with a refined and stylized heroism.
10. Because it rejuvenates the male body and renders the female more desirable.
11. War has a beauty of its own because it serves toward the aggrandizement of the great Fascist Italy.

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Roosevelt and the W.P.A.

The crisis in the artists' project throws into sharp outline the whole question of work relief and administration policy

By Theodore Draper

THE cops began to loosen their collars to work more easily. Then they tumbled desks and typewriters out of the way. After that, they moved forward. Two of the twenty there decided to start with Paul Block, spokesman for the closely-packed 219 artists-on-relief-but-for-how-long-oh-God. Block was easily identified; he had just spoken from one of the desks on the issues of the "sit-in." Tug and crack, the cops tried to yank him out. Two rows of workers in front of Block, arms tightly locked in arms, saved him for the moment. Four more cops swung into action. Forming a wedge of bone and muscle, the six drove into the line, elbows whacking, but the line held firm.

The cops adopted another tactic. They began to yank artists off the line by ones and twos. A cop would take one of them by the neck, or the coat, or the arm, or whatever was available, and pull. The workers, front and rear, yanked back. One artist, falling, pulled a few more forward. Gradually the human chain began to yield.

The place was a setup for the cops. When the artists came up to protest announced dismissals from the Federal Art Project in New York, they had to move to the far end of the large room, about seventy feet from the elevator. In order to throw out any of the delegation, the cops had to drag him or her the whole distance down the floor to the elevator. Near the elevator, there was a sort of enclosure where the cops did most of their slugging. They were safe from eyes in the rear.

This is how it worked in a typical case. Five cops had an artist on the floor. He struggled as they pulled him slowly towards the elevator. Finally, he caught hold of the leg of a desk with one hand. One cop swung heavily at the extended wrist. Again they dragged him down the hall. Ten feet or so farther, he caught hold of a pipe near the wall and again clung fast. A cop came up from behind and swung a hay-maker with his club. The wonder was he didn't pass out. They had no trouble with him after that. The elevator waited until nine more artists were hurled in, then down it shot. The cops relaxed.

Everybody took a recess each time the elevator left the floor. When it came up again, a cop shouted: "O.K. Fill it up." The whole barbaric business was renewed. These artists had obviously not come to fight. Such was neither their temperament nor their training. They fought awkwardly. The indignity was appalling; to surrender would have been infinitely worse. So they resisted with all they had. One girl, a cop at each foot, a cop at each hand, struggled outstretched at four ends as she was carried all the way to the elevator. The majesty of justice had a wonderful time when one girl's sweater, rolled up as she lay struggling on the floor, revealed a patch of white skin.

Cops from Long Island answered emergency calls, and the twenty increased to eighty during the hour and a quarter of the battle on the eighth floor of 6 East 39th Street, city office of the W.P.A. Federal Art Project. Six girls fainted. One artist may have a fractured skull. Twelve were sent to the hospital.

All 219 were arrested and charged with "disorderly conduct." Many of them were as bewildered as they were hurt. They had heard that cops slug workers, but did not think of themselves in this category. They had also read that artists are persecuted in China, Japan, Poland, Germany, but did not visualize this kind of assault in America. It was little satisfaction to get "suspended sentences" at the trial.

ALL this little more than a month after President Roosevelt concluded his campaign for reëlection in a speech at Madison Square Garden with the pledge: "Of course we will provide useful work for the needy unemployed; we prefer useful work to the pauperism of the dole." These artists were needy unemployed, among them some of notable achievement and substantial recognition: Philip Evergood, whose paintings hang in the Whitney and Metropolitan museums; Maurice Gluckman, winner of a Guggenheim fellowship; Maurice Becker, Phillip Reisman, Robert Cronbach, and others.

Most of them had so greatly abhorred the choice between "useful work" on the W.P.A. and "the pauperism of the dole" on Home Relief that they could not bring themselves to submit to the often cruel and debasing "investigation" to prove "need." When the Federal Art Project was formed, 25 percent were exempted from the necessity of undergoing the "means test" for precisely this reason. This very feature of the Federal Art Project, which originally distinguished it from the heavy-handed, heartless procedures enforced in the W.P.A. generally, now rose to plague the artists. The administration was ousting them from jobs on the pretext that they had not been "certified for relief."

Sid Gotcliffe

The layoffs on the Federal Art Project, so bravely resisted, are critical at this time for all of the 2,500,000 manual, white-collar, and farm workers now on relief throughout the country.

The W.P.A. roll has been dwindling ever since last January, when it reached its peak. Cuts have been made wherever resistance was low or badly organized. This has always been an axiom with the Roosevelt administration. Thus the first substantial cuts in the relief rolls were made in the South and Southwest last February. Elsewhere, especially in cities where the unemployed were strongly organized in the Workers' Alliance or otherwise, cuts were made mainly by indirection. Workers who left projects for one reason or another were never replaced by other needy "employables." Projects were prematurely terminated. No new projects were undertaken. Transfers were not made from a defunct project unless pressure was irresistible. There are now about 1,000,000 persons fewer on relief than last year.

These cuts slowed down in June and July and ceased altogether in September. The election campaign was reaching its stride. President Roosevelt was forced to spend much of his time and exert much of his eloquence on the relief problem. Whatever his own views, the issue was forced by the backers of Governor Landon, who made no bones about their intransigence on the question. Relief, and with it the W.P.A., had to be liquidated by throwing the "burden" back to the states and localities, said the Republicans, well aware that in every case where this had been done, notably in New Jersey, relief had broken down completely.

By September 6, in his Labor Day speech, President Roosevelt was forced to make definite commitments. He went the whole hog in that speech by assuring his radio audience that there would be no "lessening of our efforts under W.P.A. and P.W.A. and other work-relief programs until all workers have decent jobs in private employment at decent wages." In the same speech, he promised that

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Ben Yomen

THE THIRD DEGREE

"Do you need the job? Answer No!"
"Have you any dependents? Answer No!"
"You carry insurance! Say Yes!"
"You wife is working. Don't lie!"

"the cost of employing those who are entirely able and willing to work must be borne by the federal government." And on October 1, he categorically took issue with the "foolish fear," spread abroad by the Republican strategists, that relief and other New Deal measures would incur a "crushing load of debt" which would have to be paid "by oppressive taxation on future generations."

Has President Roosevelt kept faith?

SOON after election, ugly portents of promise-breaking began to appear in the press. As early as November 6, Col. Brehon B. Somervell, W.P.A. administrator in New York City, appointed 1200 investigators to establish (for the fourth or fifth time) the "need" of all relief workers in the city. Even more cause for alarm was an announcement by W.P.A. Administrator Harry L. Hopkins on November 12 that increasing "prosperity" was gradually making relief unnecessary. Four days later, Postmaster General James A. Farley, certainly the last man in America who needs to guess at administration policies, told Dublin newspapermen that relief would be decentralized by shifting it to localities, and that the W.P.A. as such would be wound up. Farley's statement has never been contradicted by a responsible government official. On November 19, the order went out from Washington for large-scale layoffs in the drought area. Drought relief was ordered to come to an end for 250,000 farmers by December 15 at the rate of 2500 layoffs a week right at the start of the fierce northwest winter. About two fifths of these farmers were promised transfer to the Resettlement Administration at $18 a month per family compared with the $40-to-$50 standard on the W.P.A. On November 20, Pat Harrison, Democratic chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, picked up the prosperity myth in a statement which pointed to brisker business as reason for curtailing "emergency" expenditures like relief. And on that same day, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in very much the same language used by Farley in Dublin and Harrison in Washington, issued a "report" in which it advocated the complete abolition of federal relief on the ground that "unemployment is local."

All of these reasons for curtailing work relief are phony on the testimony of the highest officials. On December 1, Aubrey Williams, acting W.P.A. administrator, supplied the sod for burying the prosperity myth. According to Williams, private business has been able to reëmploy only three percent of workers on relief per month, while the projected layoffs amount to many times that number. Although Hopkins used the myth to justify cuts on November 12, he himself thoroughly exposed its basic falseness in a speech before the mayors' conference on November 17. "I believe," he said, "that under our present system we will have to face indefinitely the fact that many people will want jobs who cannot find them." How many? Even granting a volume of production equal to the 1929 peak, there will still remain between 6,500,000 to 7,500,000 unemployed, according to Hopkins. Here is the key to the present situation. Brisker business has meant a great increase in profits, a small increase in wages (but a much greater increase in prices), and only a very small increase in employment.

By the beginning of December, nobody in Washington doubted that the worst would befall W.P.A. and relief in general, although the W.P.A. national administration continued to maintain silence and feign ignorance. It was at this point that Somervell announced extraordinary cuts in personnel on the four arts projects—drama, art, music, and writing—before January 1. Those judged "non-essential" were to be fired. According to this newest pretext for cutting W.P.A., workers are not put on work relief because they are in need of relief. Indeed, the project's the thing. It is not, as President Roosevelt said, that "we will provide useful work for the needy unemployed," but that we will provide useful unemployed for needy work. Obviously, if there is to be no "lessening of our efforts under W.P.A. and P.W.A. and other work-relief programs until all workers have decent jobs in private employment at decent wages," then it would be a simple matter to create new projects where the workers would be "essential." Certainly there are many greatly needed public works and social services.

In any event, Somervell announced that the four arts projects would be cut from 10,321 to 8398, or 18.6 percent, with the art project suffering the most severe slash of all, 22.3 percent. This announcement set in motion those forces which resulted in the sit-in by 219 artists at the art-project office. The artists did not resort to the sit-in until after their protests had been crudely and cynically rejected. When a delegation visited Elmer Englehorn, project executive, just prior to the slugging, they were told: "You can dig ditches." To which one member of the delegation replied: "The quota on that was filled long ago."

Protests such as these quickly forced the national administration of the W.P.A. to

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disclose how black the situation for relief workers throughout the country really is. Aubrey Williams announced forthwith that all W.P.A. projects will be suspended not later than January 20 unless Congress, which meets January 5, appropriates more funds. Sufficient pressure has already been exerted to force the abandonment of another Williams threat to drop 425,000 W.P.A. workers by December 15. But those already dismissed have not been reinstated and the 425,000 may still go at a later date and more opportune moment.

The chances are that the immediate future of work relief will not be settled until Congress and the President take action. Meanwhile, however, the W.P.A. national administration is wriggling in the web of its own duplicity. One day Aubrey Williams announces that 425,000 are to be fired. A few days later, this is categorically denied by Harry Hopkins. Williams denies that sit-in strikes and protest actions are cause for firing relief workers. But workers are fired by W.P.A. Administrator Somervell in New York for precisely this reason. Hopkins in one breath asserts that "no one in the United States is going to be dropped from W.P.A. who is in need of relief" and in the next affirms that 250,000 farmers are going to be transferred to the Resettlement Administration. Williams says there is a money shortage and Hopkins says there is not.

What has obviously happened is that the administration definitely planned and ordered large cuts in W.P.A., that these orders are being carried out on a local scale even as the administration has been forced to retreat from its originally uncompromising position by the wave of protests which rose coincident with the first cuts. Some progress to save the jobs has been made, as proven by the crop of contradictions forced upon the relief administrators, but it is no more than a beginning and no more to be relied upon without the effective power of the relief workers and the trade unions to bring it to successful conclusion than President Roosevelt's expansive pre-election promises.

It would be a mistake to dismiss these promises as of no importance. These promises have a certain importance because they are in unmistakably sharp collision with the present policy of cutting W.P.A. Effective pressure can be put on the Roosevelt administration on this ground alone. There is assuredly no finality about the layoffs. They represent the program of Governor Landon and the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, not the program for which the majority of the people voted. Arouse the people to action against this shocking fact and you scuttle the whole policy.

Scott Johnston

THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER

"I weep for you," the Walrus said,
"I deeply sympathize."
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

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Freud's Error

As against sex, there is a more basic influence in man, says the author, who nevertheless sees in psychoanalysis a historic advance

By Jack Lindsay

WE can best understand where Freud goes wrong if we consider the way in which his theories have developed. He began by trying to find the cause for the neuroses of people in his period, the late nineteenth century. These people were adults, mostly (but not all) of the middle and upper classes. Neurosis, being an entire derangement of the organism, naturally deranges sexual relations and emotions; and, as we see in the instance of Christianity, the person who has lost touch with the social whole is increasingly driven back on the narrowly personal relations, the generative symbols and mechanism. Freud, therefore, quite rightly found the trail of sexual symbols everywhere in the sufferings of his neurotic patients; and since this discovery had many surprising aspects, since it ran counter to so many established ideas and prejudices, he found that to make his points he had to lay more and more emphasis on the sexual factors both in neurosis and in normal adult life.

We cannot say that this direction and emphasis in his analysis were incorrect. Sex is at the root of all activity insofar as activity involves a desire to reproduce oneself, to find a harmonious balance in personal relations, to project oneself into a higher stage of being; it pervades the whole life of the adult, even when it is not consciously obtruding itself.

The denial of sex was part of the denial of life's wholeness inevitable in a class-riven society; and so Freud's discovery of the centrality of sex was a revolutionary scientific act.

But he was not content to mark the pervasive quality of sex; he tended to abstract it as a kind of god-force controlling the individual. This tendency is easily understood if we remember the startling nature of his discovery and the fact that the most obvious manifestations of his patients' collapse were sexual disorders. He soon found that the pervasive and central nature of sex was not merely incidental to neurotics, but was universal. The neurotic was merely an individual in whom through excessive stress the key nature of the sexual relations and emotions became obtrusive; the cracking of the shell revealed the inner structure. To correct the disorder was not to eliminate the centrality of the sexual emotions and relations; it was to make them function effectively, so that their mechanism was again for the most part unapparent.

But Freud tended to abstract the sexual relations as a kind of fate, a structure of compulsion living over against the consciousness of the individual and ready to destroy and disrupt if its dues were not paid. As usual, the division of the abstraction shows the structure of fear and discord created by the class state. Having once made a kind of abstraction of the sex force, the libido, Freud was unable to make a genuinely dialectical analysis of sex and neurosis.

This failure shows itself nakedly when we follow him back into the crannies of "unconscious" emotion and symbolism in the child. For Freud by his unerring diagnostic skill realized that the sources of pang in the individual could not be localized in hard-and-fast fashion.

Soriano

They went back and back, to the cradle, into the very womb. Here then, in the actual clinical analysis, Freud showed himself magnificently dialectical. But he could not, because of his initial abstraction of the sex-force, gain the full advantage of his own method; he could not make the complete dialectical approach which would have united individual and social, and which would have seen the social relation without losing sight of the organic centrality of sex.

He traced the discords in relationship right back to infantile traumata. But, hampered by his concept of libido, he was forced to analyze the infantile expressions or distortions of emotion as sexual. This was a great error of reduction. The reason that he made it was as follows. He found that the relations of the child to its parents played a decisive part in later love-relations; he found that the pattern of attraction and repulsion imprinted on the child by its early experiences set up a "repetition-compulsion" which largely dictated the pattern of later relationships. These later relationships were sexual; the patterns of the repetition-compulsion were clearly one at root; therefore (he argued) the child's experience was sexual.

In insisting thus he was partly reacting against stupid prejudices, but more importantly was seeking to establish the organic continuity and unity of life in the individual. But his initial abstraction of the libido made him misstate. He ignored the "revolution" of puberty. At puberty, male or female, the individual steps forward into an existence qualitatively different from childhood. He or she is still organically the same individual; but the patterns of action and reaction in his or her being now take place on a new level, are directed to new ends. Sex is the signature and psychic centralization of this new birth.

Therefore to cloud all this new development by saying that the child was sexual also because it revealed the same patterns of desire and fear as the adult, is to be mechanist, static, non-dialectical. And this non-dialectical approach is based on the initial error of abstracting the libido.

If we traverse the ground of Freud's inquiry after releasing ourselves from his abstract concept of the libido, we find little need of all his machinery of ego, id, and so on. (For it is inevitable that the abstract approach will tend to the idealist method of creating a hierarchy of interrelated entities: the reflection of a hierarchical idea of social relationships.) We find that the real basis of all the infantile emotions and relations is *food and digestion*. The child's mother-love and father-antagonism are based on its food-needs and nothing else—except the primal birth-pattern that is omnipresent for both child and adult. So far from describing the child's relationships as sexual, it would be far more correct to effect reduction the other way round and to analyze sexual emotion as the expression of food-cravings.

This attitude would not, of course, be correct for a complete analysis of sex, but it would have a lot of truth in it. Digestion is basic. Reproduction, low in the evolutionary scale, is inseparable from digestion; the two processes are simultaneous. As organisms grow more complex, the mechanisms of digestion and reproduction tend to separate. But comparatively recently in our history (in evolutionary time) the reproductive and digestive organs were still closely connected, as in platypus and crocodile. In the same way as the organs have managed to separate only after a long identity, the sudden sprouting of the procreative capacity at puberty occurs as a division of the blood's function. Till puberty the blood has only its digestive functions; after puberty it has also the reproductive function. This duality does not occur as an abstract separation of sex. The bloodstream is one, and always one. And sex expresses itself in the same patterns of relationship as did the digestive need. Many of the forms of activity it creates are merely modifications of activities originally started off by food-needs: such as kissing, in which the sensitivity of the lips developed for food-sampling and so on, is made a medium for achieving contact and a sense of possession of the beloved. If we are going to make reductions it would therefore clearly be more

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sensible to talk about the lover wishing to eat his beloved than about the child having a sexual relation with its parents.

This is not to say that there are no desires in the child for caresses, etc., of the kind that we call sexual in the adult. But there is a basic difference. With the child the relation to the pattern of food-needs and satisfactions is direct. With the adult there is a differentiation set up, which means a basic variation in functioning.

What is important is the difference: the new quality, the new intensity, of psychic organization; the new unity of thought and act.

This new unity involves the whole question of the relation of the individual to society; for it is not a mere outburst of Freud's abstract libido. It is a new expansion and centralization of the individual. It looks outward on the *whole* problem of human relationship, social responsibility, work, food, shelter, mating. Sex is clearly of tremendous importance in the new balance that is sought. But we do not clarify that importance if we abstract it as a kind of lord and master amid a hierarchy of psychic agents, as Freud does. The basic thing is still the food-relationship, since without food life itself, with sex and all other manifestations, ceases.

Here is a delicate problem which I do not pretend to be able to state satisfactorily. It will be the business of a developed Marxist psychoanalysis to do so. But one can see that the polarity of the individual as a sexual and as a social being produces no problems when the unity of function in the organism is harmoniously expressing itself. Sex, as we said, is not an abstract division in the blood at puberty. The new sexual centralization of the organism is in no way separate from the unity of thought and act required from the individual as a social being. Discord in the sexual mechanism is inseparable from discord in the sphere of social activity.

The problem of food that confronts the individual at puberty is a social problem, for the very meaning of humanity is the social union, with tool and speech, for productive purposes. Therefore the basic relationship that the individual at puberty has to get right is the social relationship of work. If he solves that problem, he has the basis for the liberation of his sexual nature. Not vice versa, as the Freudian back-to-front conception would have it. One point to remember in assessing the reasons for Freud's errors is that his patients were casualties from industrial capitalism on its last legs, mostly casualties from the social levels divorced from productive activity. These people were driven back on their purely personal resources, on emotion abstracted as much as possible from social activity and reduced to the narrowest form of personal and physical relationship. Hence the social discord, though the very heart of the breakdown, was peculiarly deeply hidden.

Moreover, the anarchic basis of capitalist competition, reaching the first culmination of its contradictions in imperialism about that time, doubtless helped to create the emotion of a vast dark force of ruthless necessity operating by laws totally unconscious and devoid of any planned significance.

A. Ajay

"With things so much better, I expected the Times to find no more than Fifty Neediest Cases this year."

That Freud's depictment of the Unconscious has been very fruitful in helping us to realize our psychic organization, I thoroughly agree. But his idealist abstract-force approach is to be found here also. He tends to set up the Unconscious as a kind of monster, a jungle-fate; and this tendency, I suggest, was aided by the nature of the capitalist state at the time when he began his work.

By this statement one does not mean that neurosis first began to appear during that time. But one does mean that the reason why consciousness of the problem then became possible, why the division had grown so acute that it threatened to destroy the basis of individuality altogether, was because the contradictions of class-society had reached such a dangerously anarchic stage, on such a huge scale, that Freud's inquiry into the sources of discord in individual life was as necessary as Marx's inquiry into the sources of discord in social life.

A Marxist will find much that interests and illuminates in Freud's concept of the ambivalence of the Unconscious; for dialectics insists on the fusion of opposites in all process. But Freud, because of his mechanist viewpoint, is unable to explain how his Unconscious, cleft as it is by contradictions of desire, can ever issue in act at all. Such dilemmas are inevitable wherever the idealist-mechanist method of analysis is used.

A few words on the chief dissident schools of psychoanalysis. It is worth while noticing these schools because the basis of their quarrels with Freud expresses Freud's shortcomings. Jung felt that Freud was wrong in importing the sex-concept wholesale into infantile life; he tried to correct this error by abstracting all the patterns of relationship altogether. In short, so far from correcting Freud, he disrupted the real connections revealed by Freud and took a wholly idealist attitude. Yet the angle of his criticism is of value in helping us to clarify the points where Freud went wrong.

Adler also felt that Freud had erred in imposing the sex-analysis on all psychic manifestations. But, like Jung, governed by the very method against which he was protesting, he substituted another abstraction for Freud's libido; he saw all activity as personal struggle, ignoring the whole social content which distinguishes human conflict from other biological manifestations of conflict. He, like Jung, thus ends by destroying the intricate strands of reality in Freud's demonstration of the interconnecting links of experience. Yet he, too, incidentally makes many shrewd points of criticism and suggestion.

Indeed, if we take the real edge of Jung's and Adler's criticism—which is directed against Freud's missing of the social whole—we find that Freud's work, redirected by their protest, can produce a dialectically-materialist psychoanalysis. Freud's position as the discoverer of a new world of knowledge is as secure as that of Newton or Darwin.

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Walter Lippmann's Logic

Contrasting his pre-election with his post-election comments, not to mention the facts, reveals a new flexibility in an already willowy mind

By A. B. Magil

YOU may recall that as the great night which descended on Landon settled thicker over what had been the dream of Hearst, a small still voice arose to dispel the darkness.

It was Lippmann—yes, Walter, the *Herald Tribuner*. The same who had once been a Socialist, who had contributed to the old *Masses,* rubbed elbows with John Reed, and helped found the *New Republic.* And who had in the course of years attained the ripe wisdom that permitted him to swallow Landon raw, skin, bones, and all, and still retain that look of owl-like innocence and the knack of floating on the surface of every political idea like oil upon water. For example:

> The character of the returns disposes of the idea that the President's victory is due to a sectional or a class alignment in American politics. The cities voted for him, but so did the countryside, the industrial centers, where the more recent immigrants predominate, the agricultural communities, peopled by the older American stock. [In fact, almost everybody *except* the Morgans, du Ponts, Hearsts, *et al.* and those seduced by their loyal Lippmanns—A. B. M.] . . . Though a certain amount of class-consciousness was felt on both sides, I am inclined to believe that it was no greater than in the election of 1928, when Al Smith was running. There was some bitterness, but not more bitterness than in 1916, in 1920, and in 1928.

"There was some bitterness. . . ." Really, Walter, how could you?

> The election, in short [said Lippmann] may be called a normal American landslide in which the victor polled the votes of all sorts of people in every part of the country. The results call for no subtle interpretation, for no attempt, as the French say, to find twelve o'clock at quarter past two.

In short, everything is normal—including the Lippmann casuistry. There was an election; one man won, the other lost. So what?

Thus Lippmann applies his intellectual mustard plaster to the choleric chests of the Liberty Leaguers which but yesterday were choked with hoarse cries of "Communism," "collectivism," "dictatorship."

Only shortly before the election, he wrote:

> Nothing could be worse for Mr. Roosevelt or the Democratic Party, or for the country, than another Democratic landslide. For Mr. Roosevelt it would be another personal triumph which in human nature generally, and in his nature peculiarly, does not make for judgment or magnanimity. For the Democratic Party, a landslide would give a great impetus to its transformation from a national to a sectional and class organization.

Came the landslide. But with a few whisks of the Lippmannian wand, what on October 20 had been visualized as a major disaster—"nothing could be worse"—became on November 5 only a routine phenomenon. And the swirling class and sectional implications which the *Herald Tribune* crystal-gazer had foreseen on October 20 subsided on November 20 to not even a ripple on the calm waters of American life.

One might be tempted to say that this is Lippmann sober overriding Lippmann drunk, or vice versa. But there is always a vast sobriety in Lippmann, always the sage and circumspect air, the bound-in-calfskin patriotism, the spurious plausibility. Lippmann's thinking is always tailored to fit the occasion.

What this tory mandarin has done is to substitute arithmetic for politics. He counts votes and discounts history. He pretends that nothing has happened since 1928: no economic crisis which has shaken the foundations of capitalism and stirred millions into political activity; no rise of reaction and fascism to threaten democratic liberties in all capitalist countries, including our own; no unprecedented concentration of reactionary big business forces around the Republican candidate; no equally unprecedented rallying of the trade unions around the Democratic candidate; no movement of large numbers of voters toward independent political action and a farmer-labor party. It is just another Harding landslide.

Lippmann's fellow-columnist, Dorothy Thompson—whose contributions in the *Herald Tribune* are an amazing farrago of reactionary and progressive ideas—is also good at arithmetic.

"It is impossible to describe as a 'class vote' anything so overwhelming," she wrote after the election. "Every voter on relief, and every voter who is a member of any trade union could be eliminated, and still Mr. Roosevelt would have been reëlected."

It is literally true that every voter on relief and every trade-union vote could be subtracted from the Roosevelt total and still leave him with enough to win. That's the arithmetic of it. But it is not true that without the support of the organized workers and those on relief Roosevelt could have swung all or even most of the other voters. John L. Lewis hit the nail on the head when he said after the election: "Unorganized labor has followed the leadership of organized labor."

What Lippmann and Miss Thompson chose to ignore is that for the first time the organized workers acted as a compact unit in the support of a presidential candidate. They thereby assumed leadership not only over the unorganized workers, but over the non-proletarian masses as well, and played the decisive role in the Roosevelt landslide.

There are broader implications of the election which the two columnists likewise ignore. In the first place, the vote constituted a virtual uprising of millions of the common people against the forces of big-business reaction ("The feeling seems to be bitter—almost dangerously so," wrote a spokesman for the right wing of the New Deal, General Hugh S. Johnson, on the eve of the election after a trip through four states). Secondly, in the minds of these millions the vote represented a mandate to Roosevelt to carry out a program of concrete social reforms. And in the third place, apart from the election successes of the farmer-labor movement in several states, the very nature of the hopes which millions have placed in Roosevelt will lead them to independent political action as the only way of converting these hopes into reality.

Hearst may don sheep's clothing, the National Association of Manufacturers may talk "era of good feeling" for public consumption, and the Walter Lippmanns may chatter about "normal landslides," but the responsible circles of Wall Street are gauging the election returns with something more than an adding machine. On the day after the election Thomas F. Woodlock wrote in the *Wall Street Journal:*

> Today we have a new main cleavage of political opinion which, whether for good or ill, will be with us as far as we can see into the future. The first thing to note in that cleavage is that it is deeper than any heretofore experienced since the Civil War. It is a cleavage of opinion touching the fundamentals of our economic life. Finally, it is a cleavage upon lines largely of economic class divisions, more extensive than any similar cleavage in our experience in the past.

This is one Wall Street man speaking to his Wall Street brethren. Lippmann, writing for a wider public, cannot afford to be so forthright. And so we find him, only a few weeks after his valiant attempt to cover up the significance of the election, declaiming with characteristic sophistry against "the dictatorship of the majority"—in the name of democracy of course. Lippmann has been many things in his day: radical, faint-hearted liberal, and tory. Evidently he is still on the move. After Alf Landon, will it be Adolf Hitler?

Lippmann once sneered at John Reed. Reed is dead and Lippmann is alive; but in this case all the life is on the side of the dead. The words of Jack Reed will be meat and drink for the hearts and minds of free men in generations to come when the name of Walter Lippmann is not even a whisper in the wind.

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NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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★

Once More the "Nation"

THE *Nation* has at last referred to our editorial analyzing its attitude toward the Moscow trial. It has used, however, a type of discussion which tends to obscure the facts involved, so these had better be stated first. A treasonable organization existed and functioned in the Soviet Union, directed by Kamenev and Zinoviev. This organization attempted to kill Stalin, Voroshilov, and other Soviet officials. It actually did kill Kirov. The leaders of the conspiracy were caught. They confessed. They were tried openly. They confessed again. All the men tried implicated Leon Trotsky as a leader in the conspiracy. They were convicted and executed in accordance with Soviet law. Foreign observers present at the trial reported that it was fair in every respect. This was the testimony of all the American correspondents who witnessed it; this was also the opinion of D. N. Pritt, a leading British lawyer, not a Communist. Trotsky called the trial a frame-up.

On October 10, the *Nation* published an editorial which ignored the killing of Kirov and the attempt to kill other Soviet leaders. It propounded the theory—shattered by Kamenev, Zinoviev, and the other conspirators on the witness stand—that an underground opposition exists in the Soviet Union. The *Nation* emphasized "the mystery that veils the motives and conduct of the Moscow trials." It said these were "strange trials." It then misstated the obvious facts by saying that the accused seemed to "revel" in confessions of guilt. It attacked the *Izvestia* report of the trial as "the official record" of the court proceedings, arguing this newspaper report summarized parts of the testimony "in terms not usually to be met with in the records of a court of law." The *Nation* described the conduct of the Soviet press before the trial as "particularly shocking." It accused the Soviet press of acting upon "an overwhelming presumption of guilt," ignoring the fact that the accused had confessed their guilt *before* the trial. From this alleged presumption, the *Nation* concluded that "it is at least a question whether these proceedings could be in any true sense a trial." In short, the *Nation,* for all practical purposes, supported Trotsky's self-defense that the Moscow trial was a frame-up.

Subsequently, Trotskyite headquarters in Room 1010 at 100 Fifth Avenue issued an appeal by a so-called "Provisional American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky." This document was trickily worded to cast the most serious doubts upon the Moscow trial. It was signed by two editors of the *Nation,* and was accompanied by a reprint of the *Nation* editorial of October 10.

Thereupon we published an editorial which attempted to show that the trial was fair and valid, and that the *Nation* was hardly in a position to question the detailed confessions of Kamenev, Zinoviev, and their accomplices. In conclusion, we asked the following questions:

> Are the Trotskyites circulating the editorial of October 10 with or without the consent of the *Nation?* If without consent, will the *Nation* protest the use of its name in the defense of the conspirators? And if the *Nation* granted the Trotskyites permission to use that editorial, does it not owe some explanation to the public?

We then added that *if* the *Nation* wants to support Trotsky's criminal activities, let it no longer pose as an organ of liberal opinion, let it openly and frankly declare itself a Trotskyite mouthpiece; let the public know that it is the organ of a band of counter-revolutionary conspirators and assassins. We did not accuse the *Nation* of being such an organ; we asked it to say whether or not it was.

For several weeks the *Nation* ignored our editorial. On December 5 it finally published a reference to it. This reference was neither a discussion nor an explanation of its position. Cutely, the *Nation* compared itself to the Light Brigade and took refuge in the fancy that cannon were trained upon it from the Right and from the Left. Its argument was specious enough: the NEW MASSES criticizes the *Nation* for its stand on the Moscow trial; the *New Leader* attacks it for its editorial on Joseph Shaplen's reporting of the C.I.O. Ergo, both are wrong and the *Nation* is right in both instances.

This is at once poor logic and a dodge unworthy of the *Nation.* There is no connection whatever between Mr. Shaplen's reporting of the C.I.O. and the Moscow trial. The *Nation* is right in criticizing Mr. Shaplen, but that hardly justifies its anti-Soviet editorial. The *Nation* was apparently aware of the dilemma it had unnecessarily created. Its issue of December 5 ignored both the Moscow trial and its editorial on that subject. Neither metaphors about the Light Brigade nor Mr. Shaplen's hatred for progressive labor can obscure the fact that the *Nation* has by implication made serious charges against the Soviet government. It has encouraged the serious libel that the Moscow trial was not genuine. Given an opportunity to clarify its position and to withdraw its anti-Soviet innuendoes, it has failed to do so. It has refused to shed any light on the circulation of its October 10 editorial by the Trotskyites in their propaganda against the Soviet Union. It seems to us now more than ever that the *Nation* should explain.

Murdering a Myth

THE advertising agency handling the Chesterfield cigarette account has murdered Santa Claus. His sleigh has probably been towed to Henry Ford's museum; his reindeer sent to Seattle hotels as caribou steaks. Advertising's maid of all work, the pretty girl, stepping out of a plane in form-fitting furs, has taken over Santa's job. This is certainly a risk for Big Business to take. Can capitalism's long-legged, slim-waisted pet be put over as the great giver when her time-honored place is on the receiving end? If sex-appeal had to be there, what was the matter with Miss America, in negligee, leaning from an *art-moderne* divan and winking up the chimney? It seems rather dangerous, this playing around with myths. Excuse the masses from belief in one, and they might feel free to drop the others. Gentlemen of Big Business, be careful!

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READERS' FORUM

A letter from Beth McHenry—Comment from the Southwest and from Vienna—More felicitations

● THE JUDGE sitting on the bench in the Birmingham court shifted his quid of tobacco and leaned forward to look at the two young Negro boys standing below. One of them was wearing a sack for a shirt and the other had on shoes that were tied on with string. The boys were charged with vagrancy because some cop was trying to bring up his quota of arrests to meet the Birmingham standard, which is very high. The judge was enjoying himself. He smiled down at the prisoners in his best "at the circus" manner, then he asked if they had dice. They didn't have, but someone else in the court produced a pair and the judge let the boys, who hadn't done anything, roll their own punishment. One of them got five months and the other got eight. The judge was still laughing when they left the court. But the boy with the sack for a shirt looked at his friend whose shoes were tied on with string, and his glance held all the suffering that's in the hearts of these kids, the young of an oppressed people.

There are two million Negro youth in America between the ages of ten and seventeen, and you'll find them working in the South and in the North—working the longest hours, for the least pay, under the worst conditions—345,000 Negro children, working on plantations and in people's houses, underfed, under-clothed, with no chance for education.

But there is something new on the horizon now. The Negro youth are taking up the fight for their rights. There were two hundred youth delegates at the National Negro Congress held last February in Chicago where the question came up sharply: "What about the Negro youth?" A youth committee was formed, and work was begun at once to mobilize the Negro young people, in the South and West, East and North.

The Negro Youth of the South are going to have a conference in Richmond, Va., February 13-14. The conference, held on the birthdate of Frederick Douglass, will take up the social and economic problems of Negro youth. In preparation for the conference, sponsoring committees are being set up in Richmond, Birmingham, Nashville, Baltimore, Washington, Little Rock, and Charleston. Money will be raised through the sale of certificates, printed in various denominations, from fifty cents to ten dollars.

The second week in January will be Negro Youth Week. All over America, parades and meetings and publicity will focus attention on the Southern Negro Youth Conference.

This organization of Negro young people must have the solid support of every southerner who feels the shame that has been done to the Negro people. The trade unions of all the South, the churches for whites, as well as the Negro churches, schools, and liberal organizations should give every aid toward making the Southern Negro Youth Conference a tremendous event. This conference will place squarely before the national administration the particular problems facing the young Negro people. It will make concrete demands for education, jobs, decent working conditions, and political rights. It will bring the Negro youth closer to the white youth. Support it with every ounce of your strength! Support it with every penny you can spare!

BETH MCHENRY.

Comments from Austria

● I WANT to give you my impressions on the change in the NEW MASSES. Although this letter won't be in your hands before December, I think it will interest you how popular NEW MASSES is with young writers here. We think that the changes have been very good and certainly improve the magazine. We don't forget that our judgment is rather irrelevant as the paper is not for foreign, but American readers; nevertheless, the space which you allot to stories, politics, criticism, etc., is so well distributed, the poems and pictures so appropriate and well placed, that NEW MASSES makes good and interesting reading. During the last months there has been no article with which we *fundamentally* disagreed; in fact, the way you treat serious problems is so clear and popular and at the same time such easy reading that we wish NEW MASSES every progress.

Vienna. KARL R. STADLER.

Slandering Commonwealth

● IN *Liberty* magazine (Dec. 19 issue) there is a vicious attack on Commonwealth College. It slanders the character of all the fine young men and women that have attended that college.

Through the generosity of Commonwealth, as one of three winners of an essay contest sponsored by this school, I went there for a period of three months.

Brought up in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, I found nothing at Commonwealth of an indecent nature.

On the contrary the students have a love of clean living and good sportsmanship seldom found anywhere.

The classes are an example of free speech put into practice. One receives a keen appreciation of national and international events, discussed with an open mind. The student is free to disagree with the teacher and often does.

What *Liberty* magazine resents is the fact that Commonwealth is educating working people who have been denied the right of an education.

Surely Commonwealth College is a positive force for the making of a greater America. Any attack upon this school is an attack on those liberties won for us by the founders of this country.

WALT MCCABE.

Greetings on Our Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

HARRY F. WARD

GREETINGS! During the twenty-five years of its existence, I have followed the course of the magazine with interest and appreciation. Always it has been a challenge to American thinking and a spur to social action. Increasingly it has become a force in American life. Never was it so much needed as now—when we face the international offensive of organized reaction against democracy, against culture, against the lives of the people. It has a particular place in the urgent task of drawing together all defenders of the right of the people to govern themselves. It has an increasing opportunity to convince many Americans of the kind of social change that is needed to fulfill the democratic tradition, in the arts and letters, as well as in economics and politics. Long life to the NEW MASSES! May it grow in power!

I. AMTER

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY of the NEW MASSES, the grandchild of the *Masses,* is a day of celebration for the workers, intellectuals, and all progressives in the United States. The NEW MASSES sets the tone for an analysis of conditions in the United States and throughout the world. It is not a purely intellectual magazine, but on the contrary does and can reach masses of workers in this country who wish to obtain a weekly survey of developments throughout the world.

May the NEW MASSES go forward to a period of expansion of its activities and reach the millions of liberals and progressives in the United States who are looking for a program and leadership. This can only come from the Communist Party, which has the only program for the defense of democracy against fascism and for the struggle for socialism.

CARLETON BEALS

The NEW MASSES has a glorious and embattled history, and only a magazine as fearless could have succeeded in being suppressed so many times. The aliases under which it has been obliged to appear—*Masses, Liberator,* NEW MASSES—attest not to its own wrongdoing, but to the lack of Americanism in those who attempted to obstruct it. The magazine has been hated and loved—it has aroused those dual emotions in me on various occasions—but this merely attests to the vitality of its message. I know of no worthy cause in American and international life in behalf of which the NEW MASSES has not raised its voice. I know of no evil which it has not helped to expose. America would be a much more dreary scene without the stimulating voice of the NEW MASSES in the fields of literature, art, politics, and economics, and so I hope it will keep its fist upraised in behalf of the working class for still another twenty-five years, or as long as its mesage is needed.

ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG

TWENTY years ago, when I became a contributor to the old *Masses,* writing monthly notes on the revolutionary labor movement, the World War was on, and a great struggle of ideas, leading to a widespread shifting in political allegiances, was taking place in the European Socialist movement. The pressure of the imperialist nature of the war was serving as a test to exhibit the bankruptcy of reformist leadership and to push to the fore Lenin's consistent fight for a revolutionary policy.

At that time we were largely cut off from these currents in the United States. We lacked a deep awareness of these problems. Very little was being written in the American labor press about these events. The *Masses,* accordingly, took an important step in devoting a regular section to the revolutionary scene abroad, in the attempt to popularize the lessons of what was happening then in Europe.

Today the whole attitude toward these questions has changed. The keen interest in international problems in this country is very marked. And the NEW MASSES is keeping up with this demand, through articles by such brilliant European commentators as Dutt, Strachey, and Ehrenbourg. The service of the NEW MASSES today as a revolutionary cultural organ interpreting the international scene, as well as the home front, makes it a basic source of information and analysis not only for professionals and middle-class people, but for workers.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

A new book by John Strachey—Experimental modernism —Two aspects of Marxist philosophy

JOHN STRACHEY is, by birth and training, a member of the ruling class of England. In that country and in others, a number of men and women, similarly situated, have cast in their lot with the revolutionary working class. That this would happen in such a period as that following the war, was the prediction of Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto:* "Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact, within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a whole."

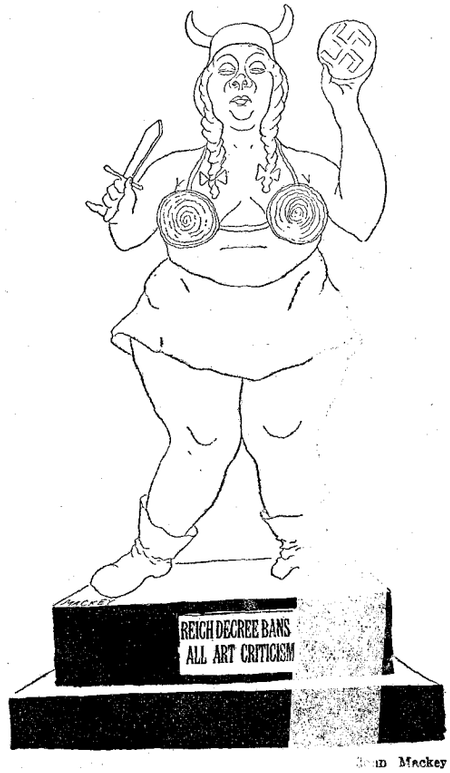
Mr. Strachey is not here* writing for that portion of the bourgeoisie, of the middle class, of the intelligentsia, which has preceded or followed him into the ranks of the revolutionary class. Nor is he writing for that portion which, for one reason or another, will never ally itself with the proletariat. He addresses himself rather to those middle-class people who are interested, but still hesitant. He wants to break down the barrier which prevents them from making that alignment with the working class which will benefit both parties.

It will be difficult for this group to resist his appeal. He puts his case honestly and clearly. He makes obscure things plain. He never uses weasel words to befuddle the issue. And he tackles exactly those questions which have worried them.

In "The Economic System," the first of the four sections into which the book is divided, capitalist production and distribution are contrasted with socialist production and distribution (what could be done in a socialist U.S. or Britain, as well as what has been and is being done in the only existing socialist community, the U.S.S.R.). In this section, the questions answered include, among others: Why do we have depressions? Can capitalism plan? What is the difference between socialism and communism? Must society be divided into classes? How does production for use differ from production for profit? Does socialism mean equality of incomes? Under socialism, what replaces the incentive of profit?

In the second section, "The Political System," the problems of democracy, liberty, religion, peace, war, and nationalism as they are related to the socialist state are considered. Here Mr. Strachey gives his answers to such questions as: What happens to civil liberties under the dictatorship of the proletariat? Does socialism stamp out religion? Why is war inevitable under capitalism? Can the revolution be achieved without violence? Why did the revolution come first to Russia? This section, admirable in most respects, contains the one chapter in the book where, I think, Mr. Strachey has fallen into serious error. His conclusions are based largely on Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State.* Engels, in turn, drew much of his material from Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society,* published in 1877. Anthropological research since that time has, to put it mildly, modified basically some of Morgan's theories used by Engels and now repeated by Mr. Strachey. The author errs in presenting as fact statements which are either not wholly true, or concerning which the truth is not known. This is all the more unfortunate in that this chapter is not necessary to prove what the author here attempted to prove: first, that the state is essentially an instrument of class domination, and second, that with the appearance of a classless society the state will disappear.

Section three, "Socialism and The Working Class," is a brilliant historical review of socialist thought and action from Thomas More through Robert Owen and the Chartists to the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels.



[illegible] Mackey

The questions covered include: Can socialism be ushered in through the establishment of model communist colonies? Why is there so much emphasis on the working class as the chief agent of social change? Are coöperatives the way out?

In the final section, "The Science of Social Change," Marxist theory is clearly expounded, the treatment Marxism received in England, Germany, and Russia is considered, and the way to socialism in countries outside the U.S.S.R. is outlined. Here the questions answered include: What is the materialist conception of history? What is dialectical materialism? What is the labor theory of value? Why is it important? Do socialists advocate the class struggle? What lessons can be drawn from the defeat of German Social Democracy? How was the British Labor Party betrayed by its leaders? What is to be done now?

The book closes with an extremely useful bibliography of the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Each volume listed is described in one or more paragraphs, and good advice is given on how best to begin a study of Marxist thought.

Mr. Strachey believes, and rightly, that "the need of the hour is the unceasing definition, restatement, and popularization of the basic principles of socialism and communism." This he set out to do. It is to his everlasting credit that he accomplished his difficult task.

And let there be no misunderstanding; the task of popularization is as difficult as it is important. The patronizing sneer that so often attends the phrase "a mere popularization" is unwarranted. The revolutionary movement has suffered because successful simple treatments of abstruse Marxist concepts have been lacking.

Mr. Strachey writes with force and clarity in a style perfectly suited to the people who read him. He has not taught, yet he seems to know instinctively what every teacher has gained from experience: that the learning process is not easy, that any new idea must be put in every possible way before there can be any certainty of its being understood. Mr. Strachey's technique is in general to state his proposition one way, explain, state it another way answering possible objections, then summarize in a definitive statement. But that's not the last of the idea. No, it appears again and again in other places until it becomes clear in all its ramifications. And often, remarkably often, the idea is so aptly phrased that it is unforgettable: "Whole generations of workers became the living fuel with which the crude steam engines of early capitalism were stoked." Mr. Strachey, it is clear, knows how to write. *The Coming Struggle for Power* was not a lucky accident. The author has rung the bell again.

* THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIALISM, *by John Strachey. Random House.* $3.

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Mr. Max Lerner has coined a neat phrase to describe John Strachey: "The revolutionary ambassador that Marxists sent to the middle class to argue the proletarian case." This work reaffirms that no other person in the English-speaking world is as well equipped for the job.

LEO HUBERMAN.

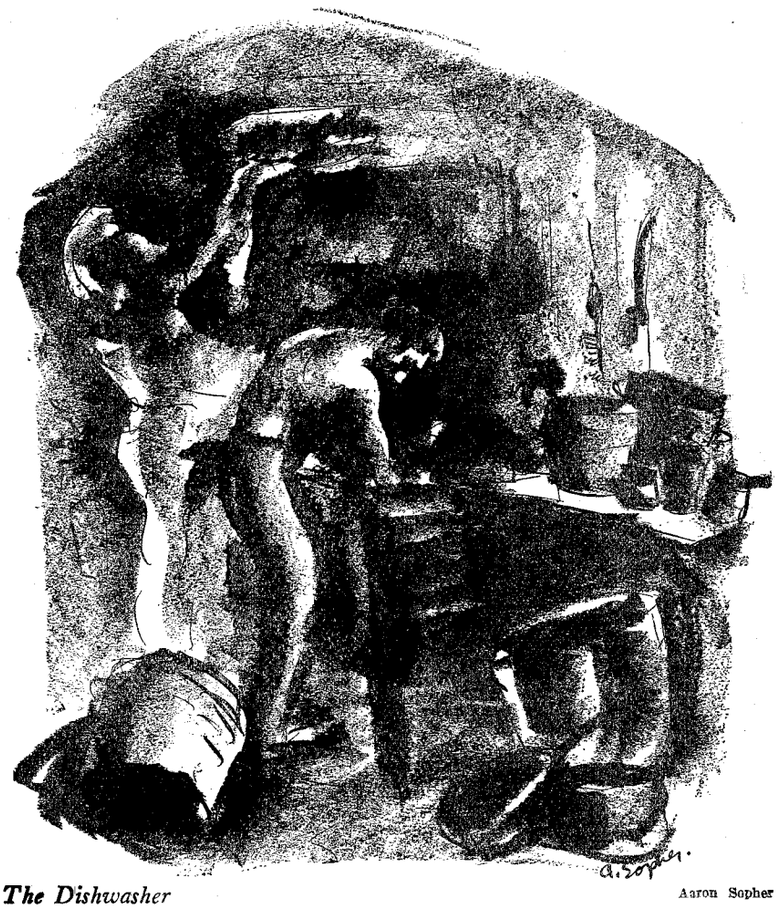
Marking Time?

THE NEW CARAVAN, *edited by Alfred Kreymborg, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld. W. W. Norton & Co. $3.95.*

BECAUSE of its hospitality to those *enfants terribles* who were bringing the experiments of modernism to this country, *The American Caravan* came to be regarded not only as an anthology of new writing, but as a reconnaissance into the future of American literature. Naturally, not all the forecasts were realized, nor was the editorial taste always above reproach, and there were any number of professional advance guardists for every instance of fresh talent. If the collections, as a whole, were as anarchic as the movements they nursed—perhaps their most serious shortcoming—still they helped to make respectable the rebels of the time, or at least the forces which some of them represented.

Now, after a lapse of six years, the anthology appears again under the title, *The New Caravan.* Outwardly it has the same air of intransigence, with its emphasis on work which has not yet passed the commercial censorship against serious writing, but there are few signs of any important movement growing out of a new generation of writers. Of course, the kind of material submitted and the methods of selection remain secrets buried away in editorial archives; nevertheless, any collection which omits so many of our more promising writers can hardly be considered completely representative. But there is an even more distressing absence of our highly publicized proletarian literature, which cannot be traced simply to editorial judgment, for there are many other indications of a general recession. Have all our critical guarantees that proletarian literature would expand and mature to the point of dominating American literature been just so much professional optimism? If so, *The New Caravan* may be taken as a monument to the dispersal, if not the demise of proletarian literature—at any rate, as it has been defined all these years.

It may be that the zealotry of some Marxist criticism confined revolutionary literature within a mold which it was bound to break if it was to approach at all the range and complexity of a new culture, and that we are now witnessing a necessary diffusion. In fact, the contents of *The New Caravan* testify to the seepage of radical premises into a large area of American literature, and though the work of the younger writers lacks the formal daring and critical direction of a conscious movement, it is, for the most part, in rebellion against the traditions of complacency. Of the forty-four contributors, more than half are concerned with social criticism of one kind or another. The luster of the "æsthetic" movements of the twenties has almost disappeared, but with it much of their freshness and boldness seems to have gone too—with the result that the voice of radicalism in *The New Caravan* has been muffled by a stodginess of form and theme. Or, perhaps, the talent for coping with new literary tasks has not yet emerged.



The Dishwasher Aaron Sopher

Few revelations are exhibited in the work of the older writers; for the most part there is the characteristic competency; and if any further tribute is to be given them it lies in their ability to appear at all in an anthology advertised as a "preview of American literature." And very little substantiation of the advertisement is to be found in the selections of poetry and criticism, which are far below the standards of the other material. Fortunately, the example of the new English poets and some Americans not represented in *The New Caravan* would undermine any theory of the intractability of the medium to a new radical consciousness. For with little regard for the morality of craft—with the exception of Muriel Rukeyser and one or two others—most of the poetry exists at the dead level of diffuse sentiments and suburban nature-jottings, rarely breaking into fresh perceptions or forms.

The quality of the fiction is somewhat higher, however, and I suppose that the appearance of at least seven interesting stories in any collection would be a good omen. There is a striking piece, frankly experimental, by Eugene Joffe, one of the youngest writers, which describes the decay of a young man and his wife, under the pressures of poverty, to the final breakdown in a kind of whimsical insanity. And "Big Boy Leaves Home," by Richard Wright, is one of the first realistic sketches of Negro life. Philip Stevenson contributes a story of two simple souls, Art and Gert, reveling in a primitive world of sights and sounds, which manages to maintain a nice balance between sympathy and satire. Add the work of Paul Corey, Fred Rothermell, Ernest Brace, and Meridel Le Sueur, whose mysticism of the senses is somewhat redeemed by an emotional intensity, and you have summed up whatever claims to distinction the fiction in *The New Caravan* possesses. Also, there is a short poetic drama by Delmore Schwartz which deserves an honorable mention. Despite its evident immaturity and its failure to carry much impact, it is one of the few pieces in the entire book to show a sensitiveness to the influences of modern literature —especially to the device of combining the ribaldry of popular life with complex and subtle meanings.

But as a whole, the anthology lacks a modern consciousness; it fails to supply a creative counterpart of our intellectual awareness of the world. Not that this can necessarily be put down to editorial blundering, but the inclusion of some serious criticism would at least have provided a sense of direction by way of a critical consciousness. As it is, *The New Caravan* is left formless, a huge body without a head, unless one considers Marsden Hartley's rhapsodic descriptions of Ryder's poverty and of Charles Demuth's Parisian adventures

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WRITE FOR COMPLETE LISTS AND SEE LAST WEEK'S NEW MASSES FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION

as art criticism. And Sheldon Cheney's account of the collapse of the art theater, informative and sane though it be, merely heralds the Left theater as the heir of the art theater. Where are the critical problems which confront a rising generation of writers? —problems which can be solved only by a self-conscious literary movement. From its activities in *The New Caravan* and elsewhere, it would seem that the younger generation, dispersed by all sorts of contradictory forces, has hardly begun to grapple with its tasks.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS.

A Master of Marxist Criticism

ART AND SOCIETY: A MARXIST ANALYSIS, by *George Plekhanov, with an introduction by Granville Hicks. Critics' Group. Cloth* $1, *paper* 35c.

IN the twenty-odd years that I've watched American publishing, some 170,000 titles, most of them deceased in their year of birth, have been issued. In this vast profusion were the memoirs of fifth-rate diplomats, generals, and Peggy Hopkins Joyce, the world views of Keyserling, Krishnamurti, and Mabel Dodge, but not the works of the greatest contemporary mind, that of Lenin, who went unpublished until a special Marxist publishing house was organized. The productions of that house at once proved, for the most part, invisible to literary editors. Yet bourgeois publishers love to proclaim themselves members of a liberal and unbiased profession and literary editors generally pipe an octave higher on that tune.

All this is certainly not news to our readers, but I am prompted to repeat it because this work of a critic of world stature should have appeared twenty-five years ago if the cultural pretensions of the book-publishing guild were genuine, but it required the enterprise of an unprofessional organization, the Critics' Group, to bring it, finally, into English print.

For us its publication is an event of importance. It makes available the work of a Marxist critic in whose presence literary discussion can ascend to a new level, a critic of broad culture, with an acute sensibility in æsthetic values. In the long run the best definition is definition by example, and it will now be possible to conduct literary discussion by both direct and indirect reference to the work of a master.

Perhaps the first, and one might almost say the overwhelming, impression of the book is the sheer range of information at Plekhanov's command; but what is more important is that it is never erudition on display, but knowledge skillfully and relevantly used. History, as Plekhanov handles it, is no lump of document mined out of libraries, but a human movement, a glimpse of the interaction of social forces at a given point. The celebrated critics of literature have all been, except for some of the now dwindling Impressionists, men of broad culture; and Marxist critics have the responsibility of having, in addition, an intensive knowledge of one factor in general culture, the incidence of the class struggle.

A second contribution of the book is the clarity with which it presents the status of ideas in art. The thesis of the autonomy of art within any social system, and of the separation of content and form, have never been so effectively disposed of, nor has the function of the idea in a work of art been so effectively affirmed. Plekhanov goes further; he reaches into the complex of social attractions and repulsions which formed the ideas. And this for its æsthetic as well as social connotations. When he exposes a false or defective idea, he supplies concurrently what is often impossible to purely formal analysis, the causes of defective characterization, defective narrative, of inharmonies and distortions within a work of art. Thus, in dealing with a play by Hamsun, in the analysis of which he virtually foretold Hamsun's recent public advocacy of fascism, he shows how the contradictions of Hamsun's worker-hating but "revolutionary" hero resulted in fatal weaknesses in the play.

It is noticeable, too, that Plekhanov always starts within the terms of the work he is discussing, rarely seems alien or hostile to it, and that he gradually loosens and enlarges it until it is brought within the terms of the Marxist world view. It is this care to stay within the terms of the work of art under discussion that keeps him from making the mistake of dismissing or understating its values and significance. Thus, by not ignoring or underestimating the general hostility to bourgeois values of a great deal of romantic literature, and its progressive æsthetic role at certain points of its evolution, he is able all the more decisively to expose its reactionary role when it has made its peculiar antithetical adjustments to bourgeois society and has virtually turned anti-Philistinism into a vested interest. Plekhanov writes, after having spoken of the stupidity and rudeness toward art of the St. Petersburg mob of aristocrats in Pushkin's time:

> Today we may reproach for stupid rudeness not the people, the real people whose vanguard grows in consciousness each day, but those artists who hear the stirring call of the people without understanding. Those artists are guilty at best of being about eighty years behind the times. Shunning the finest aspirations of their time they ingenuously imagine themselves to be the continuators of the romantic struggle against Philistinism.

At only one point did I find myself set back rather than advanced in understanding. Plekhanov writes:

> But if there cannot be a work of art without an idea still not every idea can be expressed in a work of art. Ruskin has well said, "A maiden can speak of her lost love but a miser cannot sing of his lost gold." . . . Of course it is possible to refer to songs of war and ask: "Does war serve as a means of spiritual communion among men?" But I reply that sagas of war, while expressing hatred of the enemy, at the same time glorify the self-sacrifice of the warrior, his willingness to die for his native land.

Some sagas, especially in Icelandic literature, celebrate the prowess of killers, lone wolves among men. Within the terms of Viking society this was a fit subject for art. The guile of Jacob, of Ulysses, of other folk heroes have been fit subjects in their own setting. And the tragedy of Crœsus is probably

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not the sole example of the loss of gold as a fit subject. I cannot feel that any idea is intrinsically unfit though even the most spiritual ideas have been unfitly used. To art, also, "Nothing human is alien."

Plekhanov's career as a Marxist and a revolutionary was a truncated one. The defeated 1905 revolution in Russia disappointed him; and whether or not it had wavered before, his faith in the masses weakened. He opposed Lenin from a Menshivik, even from a Russian-nationalist position. Yet Lenin said of him: "No one can possibly consider himself a Marxist unless he has read the works of Plekhanov." His best work was unquestionably in the field of culture, where his dialectical analyses have a pioneer freshness and vigor.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Sidney Hook and Marxism

FROM HEGEL TO MARX, *by Sidney Hook. Reynal & Hitchcock. $4.*

GERMAN philosophy of the early nineteenth century arose amid especially intricate class relationships. Whereas the French and English bourgeoisie had already destroyed the *ancien régime* and consolidated their political positions, the German middle class lacked national unity—the country being divided into petty princedoms dominated by a feudal nobility—or any great measure of control over the nation's economic life. A large share of industry was in the hands of the very numerous petty-bourgeois tradesmen, handicraft producers, and peasants who were gradually being expropriated by the spread of machine technique. The German working class, for the most part in the employ of small tradesmen in handicraft industries, were politically unawakened. Marx expresses the complicated character of the class struggles in his country: "The princedom finds itself fighting the monarchy, the bureaucrat finds himself fighting the nobility, the bourgeois finds himself fighting them all, while the proletariat is already beginning to fight the bourgeois."

The advanced conditions in France and England at the time are equally relevant to an understanding of the character of German philosophy. Writing in 1844, Marx points out that a large part of German philosophic thought was expressing German history-to-come, basing itself on the integrated position of the French and English bourgeoisie, the ideal of the advanced section of the German bourgeoisie: "We are philosophical contemporaries of the present without being its historical contemporaries. German philosophy is the ideal prolongation of German history." *Ideal* prolongation, for the undecided position of the bourgeoisie, split as it was into factions, was reflected in the inconclusive and impractical formulations of the German interpreters of French liberalism.

For example, Kant had been the German exponent of the liberal ideas of the French Revolution. But because the German bourgeoisie of his time was not ready to make the material demands that the French bourgeoisie had made, and because the German

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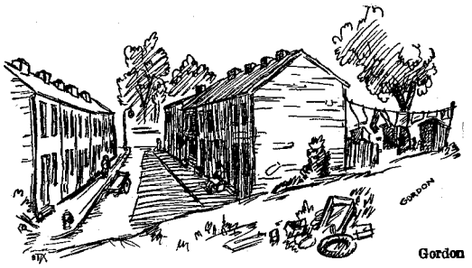
bourgeoisie was not politically unified as a class, liberalism did not then become its political weapon. The bourgeois thinkers raised the slogans and ideals of the French Revolution without moving to put them into practice. No less significant is the fact that the German censorship was so strong that slogans and ideals had to be expressed in the most abstract terms, so that they penetrated only to attuned philosophers. Kant's philosophy went far in divorcing theoretical issues from practice. He did not connect the theory of French liberalism with the material conditions which had served as its base, but abstracted only the formulæ, grounding them in a mysterious "good will in and for itself." Moreover, according to Kant's system, the "good will" functioned ideally, not in the real world. Liberalism, grounded in such a will, represented an abstract hope, an ideal to sanction rather than enforce. Kant thus expressed the important position of the German bourgeoisie.

Following upon Kant, the Hegelian system made impotence its very commandment. It advised that the Absolute would take care of everything; men must not interfere in the course of history. History is made by the Absolute Idea. True freedom, Hegel declares, is submission to the course of the Absolute. The Hegelian philosophy became the source of divergent political interpretations. It became, on the one hand, the medium for justifying the German status quo. In the hands of the Hegelians of the Left, it became the basis for a philosophy of social change. This development of Hegel to the Left is the subject of Mr. Hook's essays. The individual actors in the movement are studied in turn, and Marx's relation to the ideas of each one are sketched, beginning with Strauss, whose *Life of Jesus* was decisive in winning acceptance for historical biblical criticism and who provided the first impulse to the Left, and proceeding to Bauer, Ruge, Stirner, Hess, and Feuerbach, who carried the movement forward. By the time Feuerbach was through, the criticism of religion was complete and revolutionary. Feuerbach declared that religion is the general theory of an oppressive, inverted world. The content of religious ideals and mysteries, he showed, is made up of human qualities and functions transformed into attributes of the divine. These qualities belong to man and are abstracted and idealized to provide man with illusory perfections in a society that offers him no true happiness. The supreme being for mankind is man, not God. To return man to his supremacy, religion must be abolished. And the abolition of religion can only be accomplished through the abolition of the social ills of which religion is the expression. Under Christianity, Feuerbach declared, man's republic is in heaven. With the abolition of religion, a republic becomes possible on earth. Marx later gave this critique its proper orientation in terms of class relationships: "The mortgage held by the peasant on the heavenly estates guarantees the mortgage held by the bourgeoisie on the peasant estates."

The Young Hegelians, for the most part, used a sociological as well as psychological approach to philosophy. They became the spokesmen of the developing bourgeoisie, but omitted, as had Hegel and Kant, to provide men (their "man" and "humanity" meant "bourgeois") with a program for carrying out their emancipation. In their hands, as Marx pointed out, criticism remained "pure" and did not issue into practice. Their religious criticism did not recognize the class character of religion. When it interpreted or entered into the political struggles of the day it did so, as with Bruno Bauer, to advise against participation. In his early writings Marx condemned this school as idealist. In 1844, he made clear his own doctrine of criticism. Writing in the *Kritik der Hegelischen Rechtsphilosophie,* Marx declares that criticism is a weapon. It must be radical, that is, it must go to the root of the theories on which it operates and uncover their class needs and purposes. But it must not stop at making men conscious of partisan interests and oppressive forces that underlie prevailing theories—it must go on to demonstrate to them the course of action by which they can end those oppressions. When criticism functions in this way, it becomes a material, revolutionary weapon. Marx's later insistence on the unity of theory and practice can be seen as a restatement of these earlier convictions.

Summarizing Marx's conclusions on this point, Mr. Hook states that for Marx, philosophy is the "critical consideration of values." That is to say, Marx considered philosophic theories to be value judgments in the last analysis, expressing specific social values arising from definite class needs. All philosophy serves some partisan interest in this way. Class values lie beneath all philosophy. (Mr. Hook points out that by philosophy Marx understood social, ethical, and political theory, not formal or physical sciences.) In the actual studies of the Young Hegelians, there is evidence in Mr. Hook's volume of a great deal of solid reading in the literature of the period. The studies of Feuerbach and Bauer, especially, provide material not available elsewhere in English. But I cannot say of the general treatment of the subject matter that Mr. Hook has shown the bearings of the theories he is examining on the intricate, changing class patterns of the time. The development of Marx is not treated in terms of the social and economic scene, of which Mr. Hook reveals little knowledge, but almost entirely in terms of the ideas floating in a thickly intellectual atmosphere, in discussions which helped to discharge dissents for which there were no polit-



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ical outlets. Marx disagreed with many of these ideas, it is true. But Marx attacked them as false on careful analysis which revealed, as his criticism operated on them, the false value judgments that lay at their base. Marx's own position was developed from the point of view of the proletariat, which viewpoint he considered to rest on value judgments that are true. How he got to such a position cannot be told, as Mr. Hook tries to tell it, in terms of the intellectual conflicts in which Marx participated. It has to be told with an eye to the class struggles of the day, as Mehring, for example, tells it.

Mr. Hook's failure to make such a Marxist study of Marx and his contemporaries may also be attributed to his own confusion as to what Marx's doctrine of criticism and value judgments really was. This confusion reveals that Mr. Hook does not know the grounds on which Marx rejected alternative theories. The question on which this confusion forms is: What relevance has truth to the value judgments which underlie philosophic systems? Mr. Hook has two inconsistent opinions. He declares that the grounds on which Marx rejected alternative theories "were not always strictly logical, particularly where a normative point of view, that is, the affirmation of a value judgment, is concerned." Elsewhere Mr. Hook reinforces this opinion by declaring that truth is relevant to judgments of value only in a "pickwickian sense," which means, in no literal sense. To this position Mr. Hook adds the following contrary opinion: "Where a definite theory is propounded which sets up a claim to be true, Marx's rejection of it is primarily based upon his contention that it is false, not upon its social origin or import." Of course, as Mr. Hook seems to understand, most partisan philosophies set up a claim to truth. At the same time, as Hook himself shows, such philosophies are all value judgments. Can we determine whether they are true or false? Mr. Hook's answer is yes and no; yes, in so far as they claim to be true; no, in so far as they are value judgments. Apart from the inconsistency, Hook is here implying the very denial of Marx's theory of criticism. For he is separating value judgments from philosophic theories that "set up a claim to be true," a definitely un-Marxist distinction.

In still another place, Mr. Hook makes known an entirely different position. He states in his discussion of the second thesis on Feuerbach that "for Marx all genuine questions are scientifically determinable," that all judgments are hypotheses verifiable as true or false in public experience. This would have to include value judgments, I think, though Mr. Hook does not definitely say so. If it does not, Mr. Hook would have to say that questions of value and class interest are not "genuine questions," and Marxism, "the critical consideration of values," would be concerned with meaningless problems.

What Mr. Hook really thinks on this point, I cannot say. But I can say that the question is crucial for Marx's entire theory. For, granting the partisan character of all philosophy, granting its concern with class interests and value judgments based on these interests, it is essential to explain what criteria determine whether one theory is accepted and another rejected. Only such criteria can make clear the reasons for Marx's attack on the Young Hegelians. Only such criteria can allow us to test Marx's own formulations. In the absence of any clear statement on this point, Mr. Hook's contribution to an understanding of Marx has gaping seams. It is my firm opinion on this point that Marx's theory, based on the class interests of the proletariat, is true. Not only are his statements of his own theory, his judgments of *praxis,* verifiable as true, but his statements of the specific values which given theories, such as those of the Young Hegelians, subserve are verifiable as true. Mr. Hook's remarks on this point, as I have shown, are confused. His interpretation of Marx cannot be credited with any great value until clarity has been provided on this essential question.

H. N. FAIRCHILD.

Brief Reviews

PORTRAITS AND SELF-PORTRAITS, *collected and illustrated by Georges Schreiber.* Houghton Mifflin Co. $2.75.

Mr. Schreiber's portraits in line are clear and forceful. The written self-portraits of his subjects range from the bad-mannered superciliousness of Franz Werfel to the powerful indictment of literary exploitation by Waldo Frank; from the smug self-congratulation of André Maurois to the humble and profound self-analysis of André Gide; from the silliness of Christopher Morley to the wisdom of Thomas Mann; from the affected æstheticism of the late Pirandello ("My life—I do not live . . . but write it.") to the straightforward statement of Archibald MacLeish; from the vulgarity of that vulgarizer of history, James Truslow Adams, who concludes with this sad fear for his royalties: "There is only one certain thing ahead for me if I live some years more, and that is to pay for the New Deal," to the dignity of Barbusse, the ennobler of history, who writes: "I am a worker who follows the writer's craft. This craft obliges me as a matter of simple professional honesty to see not only the picturesque surface of things but also the deeper aspects of events; and it is because of this professional honesty that I have become a revolutionary." On the whole, these forty brief self-portraits are a credit to the craft. Most of them are clear, simple, and direct.

MINUET: A CRITICAL SURVEY OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH LITERARY IDEAS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, *by F. C. Green. E. P. Dutton & Co.* $4.

This study, despite its limitations, is decidedly worth attention. The author recognizes at the outset a definite correlation, in England and in France, between the theater and the social organism; and although one may feel that this recognition is neither as thorough, as an approach, nor as profound, in its particular applications, as it might have been, yet our own Marxist criticism is still too imperfect in the matter of solid historical literary research for us to feel too strongly about Professor Green's shortcomings.

The book is well annotated; and a pleasingly large amount of the illustrative material is drawn from original sources so that where the author's analysis is not of a fundamental nature, we can console ourselves with the evidence of the source material itself. Thus, it is scarcely far-fetched to adduce as evidence of the hysterical class nature of

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the theater in pre-revolutionary France its refusal, for example, to grant Douin's translation of *Othello* even a private production because, among other things, the hero happened to be black (Ducis, a later translator, mollified his public by diluting Othello's color, and by setting him up as a stout loyalist, opposed to the enemies of the state); and its aversion to such "low" characters as Juliet's nurse and Millwood, in Lillo's *George Barnwell*. Professor Green is not, however, unaware of the relationship between class dominance at a particular time, and the catering of literature to the tastes of that class. For example, he notes the growing pressure of the middle class as it is reflected in the French theater, tabulating the literary demands of this "new rising class" who wanted "not criticism of life, but criticism of society . . . not philosophy, but facile moralizing . . . sententious platitudes crystallized into proverb form which are handed down from generation to generation; the sagacious dictums which every parish priest or village wiseacre delivers upon serious occasions," and noting the success of those writers who worked these sentimental commonplaces into their comedies. It is too bad that this type of analysis is not turned into a systematic approach, but until a thorough competent Marxist work appears in the field, half-way approaches are welcome. PETER YORK.

WORLD OF ART, *by Eugen Neuhaus, with 124 illustrations. Harcourt, Brace & Co.* $2.50.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

A film document of the Ethiopian war—The federal theater stages a Nigerian dance-drama

THE impossibility of the so-called objective documentary film has been illustrated over and over again. Last year Paramount released *Wings Over Ethiopia* which was in effect a tribute to the civilizing efforts of Mussolini. The treatment of the entire Ethiopian war by the newsreels and now their similar treatment of the bitter Spanish struggle continue to illustrate their objectivity. And so we can be thankful that the Soviet newsreel organization, Soyuskinochronica, sent cameramen Boris Zeitlin and Vladimir Eshurin to Ethiopia. Now you can see Amkino's *Abyssinia* (Cameo, N.Y.), which makes no pretense at objectivity, and thus presents us with an honest picture of fascist imperialism at work murdering and enslaving a free people.

This Soviet documentary propaganda film begins with a pictorial record of Ethiopia's natural resources which gives us the reason for the Fascist rape. It also gives us a simple but effective picture of the social organization of the Ethiopian people and their cultural heritage. It then shifts to the mobilization of the Italian army, and, on the other side, the people rising to defend their country at all costs. The bulk of the war content is the air fighting and the horrible destruction of life and land by imperialism's barbaric weapons: bombs and poison gas. While none of the war scenes have the intensity of synthetic, reënacted war scenes of fictional films, the destruction of a field hospital by the Italian bombs is something that will turn even a strong stomach.

The entire program at the Cameo is documentary. There is a stirring short on the last Youth Day demonstration in Moscow, a reel on the Soviet workers' demonstration expressing solidarity with the people of Spain, and finally, the annual reel on the November 7 demonstration. As usual it is cleverly edited to show the reaction of foreign diplomats (watch the Japanese delegation) to the exhibition of proletarian power. This year there are, in addition, pictures of a delegation of soldiers from the Spanish people's front.

Columbia Pictures' sentimental musical romance with Bing Crosby, Edith Fellows (a swell young actress), and Louis Armstrong and his orchestra might have been a harmless and even a pleasant little film if it wasn't marred by anti-Negro chauvinism. It is surprising that an artist of Mr. Armstrong's caliber should allow himself and his excellent band to be used for such a purpose. The band appears in only one sequence and there to illustrate that story of the Negro as a chicken-thief. *Big Broadcast of 1937* also exhibited a prejudiced attitude. Teddy Wilson, of Benny Goodman's band, one of our most brilliant jazz pianists, was not even shown because he is a Negro, although everyone else in the band was featured. And while we think of it, Twentieth Century-Fox and Lew Lehr in particular should be flooded with protests for one of the vilest exhibitions of anti-Negro chauvinism that has ever appeared on any screen. The Negro's treatment in Hollywood is well known, but seldom has chauvinism been the content of a newsreel-feature sequence. The item referred to is in a recent edition and is about a football game between two Negro colleges. It is high time that all film-goers, along with the various Negro organizations, took a more militant stand on the subject of eliminating this kind of chauvinism from films.

Hollywood, and especially 20th Century-Fox, is still making better British films than the British. It all began with Fox's *Cavalcade;* there followed *Mutiny on the Bounty, Lives of a Bengal Lancer,* and the current *Charge of the Light Brigade.* All of these films are constructed so that they are visually and physically exciting—all being produced on a lavish scale and expensive budget. But all of them are basically flag-waving propaganda for British imperialism. And now 20th Century-Fox is carrying on the tradition with *Lloyds of London.* This is probably the worst of the series. It tells the story of the beginnings of the famous insurance house. A great deal of care has gone into creating atmosphere and backgrounds of old England during the Napoleonic era. Historically the film is worthless and from a dramatic angle it isn't anything to pay two dollars for (the top price at the Astor Theater in N. Y.). At the end the film even goes mystical. At the moment when Nelson is fatally shot at the battle of Trafalgar, his boyhood friend is shot by the villain of the film (throughout the film there is an attempt to establish a spiritual relationship between the two men). In spite of the fact that there is a romantic tale sandwiched between history and atmosphere (Ben Franklin meeting Dr. Johnson and Boswell, for instance), the greatness of the British Empire, the navy, the merchant marine, the importance of Lloyds as a national institution are stressed. In other words, "Rule, Britannia!" is played whenever and wherever possible.

Georges Schreiber

Born to Dance, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's much ballyhooed musical film, is a disappointment in spite of Eleanor Powell's magnificent dancing. It lacks the prime essential of that kind of musical-comedy film: speed and crackling dialogue. But there is a single sequence in the film that more than makes up for the film's dullness: a caricature of Leopold Stokowski (Reginald Gardner does the impersonation) conducting Bach in Paramount's *Big Broadcast of 1937.* Anyone who has seen Mr. Stokowski's shameful exhibition in that film will find this sequence brilliant and rewarding.

The current issue of *The March of Time* contains a friendly (and timely) section on the Federal Theater Project, a muddled, sentimental panegyric on Leopold of Belgium, extolling the treaty-break with France, and a sub-standard exposition of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence seaway project and the controversy surrounding it. PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

MOMODU JOHNSON has taken much of the dance material of his 1934 *Kykunko,* and, with Norman Coker, developed it to suit the larger cast and the more elaborate production of the three-act "African drama," *Bassa Moona* (which, translated from the Nigerian, means *The Land I Love*), the current theater project presentation at the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem; and it's a good show.

The "plot" of the drama is concerned loosely with kings and queens, princes and voodoo, war, warriors, betrothal, celebration, and coronation. Except that it is pointed for the dancing, the dramatic structure is slender and unimportant. Whatever dialogue there is interrupts the flow of movement; it's Nigerian, musical, and with meaning only for the dancing it preludes. The dance is the thing, and everything from the collecting of taxes to the setting of a feathered hat on the head of the good Prince Akidele is danced, and danced with an infectious exuberance.

There is no abstract design in the dance-play, no pretense of profundity, but there is a folk quality in Negro dancing and a freedom of movement, a spontaneity and a joy in performance that have yet to be acquired by the more sophisticated concert dancer. The Federal Dance Theatre certainly might readily pick up a point or two from the energetic, exciting, and uniformly excellently performed *Bassa Moona.*

The concert of the week was the American debut of Valeska Gert, German émigré, in a program of theater and dance caricatures.

Strictly speaking, or even kindly, Valeska Gert is not a dancer. She may be a mime of some proportions, and undoubtedly has some ability for the theater; but, for all the ballyhoo that preceded her performance, Valeska Gert indicated little knowledge of dance technique—ballet, modern, or indifferent. She was funny enough as a French diseuse and

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silly enough with the sounds and distorted faces of her *Baby* study—but certainly she never approached the category of dance.

And the nearest Valeska Gert's compositions got to the working-class characters advance notice had led us to expect were the *Vienna Lady—1890* and the two studies of a rather coarsely ugly and degenerate *Street-Walker.* OWEN BURKE.

FINE ARTS

THE extensive publicity given to the reproduction series of the Associated American Artists and Living American Art during the past months has emphasized the whole question of art-to-fit-the-pocketbook, and at this season that emphasis acquires a special meaning. The reproduction series are by now well known to most, and a boon they are. In addition, it is worth calling attention to the fact that there are two series of originals offered which are priced reasonably enough to come within the price range possible to most readers of this magazine.

In thirty galleries, throughout the length and breadth of the land, the American Artists' Congress has placed on show its group of 100 prints, woodcuts, etchings, and lithographs, by 100 artists. Many favorite NEW MASSES contributors are among the artists represented, and there is also a considerable group whose names and work will be new to our readers. In *America Today—100 Prints,* the Equinox Press volume which reproduces the exhibit, Alex R. Stavenitz remarks, "In arranging for the simultaneous showing of these thirty duplicate exhibitions, the American Artists' Congress is attempting to help the artist reach a public comparable in size to that of the book and motion picture, and to bring the artists and public closer together by making the print relevant to the life of the people, and financially accessible to persons of small means." The exhibition as a whole, he says, can be described as "socially conscious."

Extending the range of the items offered to paintings, drawings, and small sculpture, as well as prints, the coöperative exhibition and sale now on at the gallery of the American Artists' School in New York furnishes additional opportunity for the purchase of originals at a modest figure. Again many NEW MASSES contributors are represented, and again there are numerous examples of artists whose work and names are not so familiar but are nevertheless worth an emphatic welcome, including a number who have not exhibited at the American Artists' School before. One medium which has been something of a lost art is silverpoint, which is revived in this exhibition by Julian Levi in his rendering of a battered boat. Too many to mention individually, and maintaining a high standard of insight and craftsmanship, the exhibitors here show oils, pastels, black-and-white drawings, woodcuts, lithographs, and small wood and other three-dimensional forms. Prices range from one to one hundred dollars, with most under twenty-five. A. T. J.

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FORTHCOMING BROADCASTS

Laurence Stallings and Gretta Palmer, in the "Magazine of the Air," 11 a. m., Fri., Dec. 18, Columbia.

Scribner's Magazine 50th Anniversary Party. Charles Dana Gibson, Hendrik Van Loon, S. S. Van Dine, Zona Gale, George Biddle, and others, 4:45 p. m., Sat., Dec. 19, N.B.C. red.

Astronomy. Dr. Clyde Fisher, head of Hayden Planetarium, and Hans Christian Adamson, editor of *The Sky,* discuss a new 200-inch telescope, 5:30 p. m., Sat., Dec. 19, Columbia.

Christmas music: British Broadcasting Corporation carol singers, from London, 2 p. m., Sun., Dec. 20, Columbia; carols from Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, 1:45 p. m., Thurs., Dec. 24, Columbia; Handel's *Messiah,* sung by Independent Latter Day Saints Choir, 11:30 p. m., Sun., Dec. 20, Columbia.

Controversial subjects. The first of a series of broadcasts in which the public is invited to participate by mail, 10:30 p. m., Mon., Dec. 21, Columbia.

How to choose a radio. Dr. Orestes Caldwell, editor of *Radio Today,* 10:30 p. m., Fri., Dec. 18, Columbia.

Capt. Bob Bartlett. "Celebrating Christmas at Sea," 2:30 p. m., Sun., Dec. 20, Columbia.

Hendrik Van Loon, lecturing, 7:45 p.m., Tues., Dec. 22, N.B.C. red.

Current events. University of Chicago round-table discussion, 12:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 20, N.B.C. red.

Education in the news. Dr. William D. Boutwell, Editor-in-Chief, U. S. Office of Education, 6 p.m., Mon., Dec. 21, N.B.C. red.

President Roosevelt, speaking at the ceremony of the Lighting of the Christmas Tree in Washington, D. C., 5 p. m., Thurs., Dec. 24, N.B.C. blue and Columbia.

The Dance

Martha Graham and Her Group (Guild Theater, N. Y.), Sun. eves., Dec. 20 and 27.

Angna Enters (Alvin Theater, N. Y.), Sun. eves., Dec. 20 and 27.

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Contemporary prints. Many NEW MASSES contributors are among the artists whose work is shown in "America Today," the exhibit arranged by the American Artists' Congress for simultaneous exhibition in thirty galleries. In New York, the Guild Art Gallery, 37 W. 67th St., houses the show, which is also on exhibition in the museums of Detroit, Denver, Albany, San Francisco, Seattle, Kansas City, Colorado Springs, Syracuse, Indianapolis, Springfield, Mass., and New London, Conn. It can also be seen in art centers in Baltimore, Cleveland, New Orleans, Milwaukee, and Omaha. During December it will be shown at Dartmouth College, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Michigan. It will appear at other schools later.

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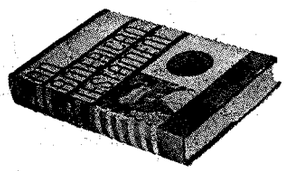

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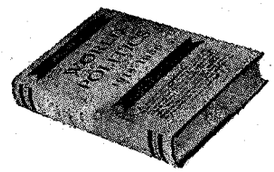

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